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# The Communist International

ORGAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Appears simultaneously in  
English, Russian, French  
and German

*Edited jointly by*  
G. ZINOVIEV  
and  
KARL RADEK

*Publishing Office :*  
Petrograd, Smolny, 63. Tel. 1.19.

*Editor's Office -*  
Petrograd, Smolny, G. Zinoviev's Cabinet

# THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

*Organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist  
International*

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ENGLISH EDITION

NUMBER 2 NEW  
SERIES

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# Notes of a Publicist—On the Evil of Despondency

NEWLY DISCOVERED ARTICLE BY COMRADE  
LENIN.

WE publish below an article recently discovered in the archives of Comrade Lenin which until this time has not seen the light. This article was written for the *Communist International* (probably in February or March, 1922), and was intended as a continuation of those "Notes of a Publicist," which Vladimir Ilyitch at that time contributed to almost every number of the *Communist International*.

I remember that Vladimir Ilyitch had promised to complete this article for one of the numbers of the *Communist International*, but failed to do so because of fatigue and the pressure of work.

There was considerable divergence of opinion within the Russian delegation in regard to the role of Paul Levi at the time of the Third Congress. Vladimir Ilyitch more than once, in personal conversation, admitted his own mistake on this question. He also, it seems, admitted it in writing. The declaration of Vladimir Ilyitch in a printed article puts an end to a controversy by no means devoid of interest in connection with an important episode of great significance in defining the tactics of the Comintern.

As to Serrati, Lenin's most bitter characterisation of him relates to the moment of Serrati's greatest mistakes, and of his most disloyal activities against the Comintern. In certain places we have cut out of Lenin's manuscript a few of these bitter words, provoked in the heat of controversy, and we are quite convinced that we are acting in this connection in the spirit of Vladimir Ilyitch himself. He would be the first to eliminate all such bitter phrases and the first to rejoice over the return of Comrade Serrati into the ranks of Comintern—the more so that Comrade Lenin very highly esteemed the abilities of Comrade Serrati.

This article by Vladimir Ilyitch—even though it is incomplete—could not appear at a more opportune moment.

We are on the eve of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern at which many of the problems touched upon in this article will be raised. The German Communist Party is again going through a very sharp internal struggle. There are certain ultra "Left" comrades who are appealing to the mistake of the late Rosa Luxemburg in 1903 against the view of Comintern in regard, for instance, to the question of organisation. It will be specially useful for these comrades to read what Vladimir Ilyitch has to say about this. There are certain comrades who like to expatiate on the "crisis" in the Comintern. It will be especially useful to these comrades to read what Lenin has to say about the "not noisy, not spectacular, not clamorous, not hurried—but fundamental work of creating in Europe and in America real Communist parties." And it will be very useful for the critics of the Russian Communist Party to read what Vladimir Ilyitch says "on ascending high mountains," and especially "on the evil of despondency" over and over again.

G. ZINOVIEV.

### I.—By Way of Example.

LET us imagine a man completing the ascent of a very high, steep and still unexplored mountain. Let us suppose that, having surmounted unheard of difficulties and obstacles, he has been able to ascend much farther than his predecessors, but that he has still not attained the summit. He finds himself in a position when to go farther in the direction and along the path he has chosen already seems not only difficult and dangerous but quite impossible. He is then forced to turn back, to descend the mountain, to seek other roads which, although even longer, at least hold out some hope of attaining the summit. But descent from such hitherto unknown heights as those on which our imaginary traveller finds himself, entails even greater dangers and hardships than the ascent. One is more apt to stumble; it is not so easy to find a safe foothold; that special mood of aspiration which in itself creates a straight upward movement, directly to the goal, is lacking. It is necessary to tie a rope round oneself, to spend whole hours digging out places with one's knife where the rope can be made fast. One must move with the slowness of a tortoise—and then move backwards, downwards, always farther from the goal, and all this without

any certainty that this desperately, dangerous, tortuous descent will soon be over, and that at the end one will find a new road along which one can go forward again, more boldly, swiftly and directly, right up to the summit.

It would hardly be natural to suppose that moments of despondency would not assail a person in such a position, notwithstanding the fact that he had attained unheard of heights. And probably such moments would be more numerous, more frequent if he should hear the voices of certain people below observing through a telescope at a safe distance that extremely dangerous descent—a descent which could not even be called (in the phrase of the "Smenovechovtsi") "a descent on brakes," because "brakes" presuppose a reliable and already tested equipage, a road already prepared, a mechanism already tried out. But here there is no equipage, no road, nothing—absolutely nothing that has been tested before.

The voices from below carry on malevolently. They openly rejoice at the misfortune of the traveller, they halloo, cry out—"now he is breaking away, he can't help himself, don't lose your senses!" Others try to conceal their malevolence, acting mostly in the manner of Yudushka Golovlev; they grieve, lifting their eyes to the mountain. "Woe to him, our fears are justified!" they cry, "Did not we who have spent all our lives in the preparation of an intelligent plan for ascending this mountain, demand a postponement of the ascent until we had finished working out our plan? And when we so passionately opposed the course now abandoned by this lunatic—(See, see! he has turned back, he is descending, he spends hours preparing the way to climb down a few feet or so)... When we systematically demanded moderation and accuracy we were slandered in the most vile terms. If we so hotly condemned this madman, and cautioned everyone against helping him or following his example, we did so exclusively because we cherished our great plan for ascending the mountain and did not wish to have it in any way.

Fortunately, our imaginary traveller, in the difficult situation we have described, is unable to hear the voices of these "sincere friends" of ascending the mountain, or he would, perhaps, be nauseated. Nausea, it is said, does not promote clearness of head and firmness of foot, especially on very great heights.

## II.—Without Metaphor.

An illustration is not proof. Every comparison is defective. This is an indisputable and well-known truth, but

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there is no harm in recalling this in order to represent more clearly the limitations of any comparison.

The Russian proletariat rose through the revolution to gigantic heights, not only in comparison with 1789 and 1793, but also in comparison with 1871. We must now give a sober clear and positive account to ourselves as to just what we have accomplished and what we have not accomplished. Our heads will then become clearer, there will be neither nausea, illusion nor despondency.

We have "accomplished" a bourgeois democratic revolution more thoroughly than ever before in the history of the world. This is our greatest victory which no power can take back.

We found the way out of the most reactionary of imperialistic wars by revolutionary means. That is also a victory which no power in the world can take back. This victory is all the more valuable in that a reactionary imperialist war is inevitable in the near future if capitalism is preserved; but the people of the 20th century will not be very easily satisfied a second time with the "Basle manifestoes" with which in 1913 and 1914-18 the renegade heroes of the Second and 2½ International befuddled themselves and the workers.

We have created the Soviet type of state, we have by this inaugurated an entirely new epoch in the history of the world, the epoch of the political domination of the proletariat, replacing the epoch of the domination of the bourgeoisie. This also cannot be taken back, although the Soviet type of government can only be successfully "completed" by the practical experience of the working class of several countries.

But we have not completed even the foundation of Socialist economy. This the hostile powers of moribund capitalism may still take back. We must fully recognise and openly acknowledge the fact because there is nothing more dangerous than illusion and dizziness, especially on great heights. There is, however, decidedly nothing "terrible," nothing that can justify the least despondency in this fact, because we have always professed and repeated over and over again the elementary truth of Marxism, that the joint effort of the workers of several of the most advanced countries is necessary for the victory of Socialism. But we are still entirely alone, and in a backward country, in a country where there has been the greatest amount of devastation. And yet we have

accomplished a great deal. Moreover, we have preserved an "army" of revolutionary proletarian forces, we have preserved its "manœuvring ability" we have preserved our clear heads which allows us to reckon accurately where, when and how far to retreat (to take the spring for the further leap forward)—where, when and how to set about the revising of those things which the revolution has not completed. We can only regard as hopelessly lost those comrades who might have imagined that it could be possible to complete an undertaking of such world significance as the completion of the foundation of Socialist economy (especially in a country of small peasantry) without mistakes, without retreats, without continual redoing of those things which have not been completed or of those things which have been incorrectly done. Those Communists are not lost (and most probably will not be lost) who do not allow themselves to fall into either illusion or despondency, preserving strength and flexibility for repeated "fresh starts," in approaching the most difficult problem.

And for us it is the less permissible to fall prey to even the slightest degree of despondency, particularly as, in spite of the devastating poverty, backwardness of the country, and the famine, we have **begun to move forward** in the sphere of preparation for Socialism, while in all parts of the world, countries more advanced, countries a thousand times richer than we and with far more military strength **continue to move backward** in the sphere of their own boasted capitalist economies which they have known and experienced hundreds of years.

### III.—On Fox Hunting; on Levy; on Serrati.

It is said that the most reliable method of fox hunting is the following; the hunted fox is surrounded at a certain distance with a rope hung with red flags raised a little above the snow; fearing this obviously artificial "human" contrivance the fox comes out only when and where this "enclosure" of flags is open, and there the hunter awaits her. It would seem that caution would be the most positive characteristic of such an animal, which is hunted by everyone. But here "continued virtue" proves insufficient. The fox is caught just because of her excessive caution.

I must confess to one mistake which it was my lot to make at the Third Congress of the Comintern, also through extreme caution. At that Congress I stood on the extreme right wing. I was convinced that this was the only correct position because a very numerous (and "influential") group

of delegates, with many German, Austrian and Italian comrades at their head, occupied an immoderately and incorrectly "Left" position, a position which too frequently serves as a substitute for sober calculation which, of course, is not so propitious for immediate and direct revolution intensified by a violent waving of red flags.

From caution, from solicitude lest this undoubtedly mistaken Left tendency should give a false direction to the entire tactics of Comintern, I protected Levy in everything, and expressed the opinion that he had perhaps, lost his head (I did not deny that he lost his head) from excessive fear of the mistakes of the Lefts, and that there had been cases when Communists who had lost their heads had "found" them again. Admitting even—under pressure from the Lefts—that Levy was a Menshevik, I pointed out that even such an admission did not settle the matter. For instance, the entire history of the fifteen-year struggle between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks in Russia (1903-1917) proves, just as the three Russian revolutions prove, that the Mensheviks were in general entirely wrong, that they were, in fact, agents of the bourgeoisie in the Labour movement. This fact is indisputable. But this indisputable fact does not remove the other fact that in separate instances Mensheviks have been right in contradistinction to the Bolsheviks, as for instance, in the question of the boycott of the Stolypin Duma, in 1907.

Since the Third Congress of the Comintern, eight months have already gone by. It is clear that our quarrel with the "Lefts" at that time is an old story, and has already been settled by events. I proved to be mistaken in regard to Levy because he has successfully shown that he fell in with the Menshevik course not accidentally, not temporarily, that he had not "gone to extremes" as a protest against the extremely dangerous mistakes of the Lefts, but permanently, decisively, wholeheartedly. After the Third Congress, Levy, instead of honestly recognising that he ought to ask to be taken back into the party, as a person should, who has temporarily lost his head in exasperation at certain mistakes of the Lefts, began to heap petty abuses on the party, and tried to damage it; he became, in fact, a servant to those agents of the bourgeoisie, the Second and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  Internationals. Indeed, the German comrades were quite right when not long ago they retorted to this conduct by excluding from the party a few more gentlemen who were giving secret support to Paul Levy in his noble occupation.

parties after the Third Congress of Comintern proves that they have profited by and are correcting the mistakes of the Lefts at that Congress—gradually, slowly, but unwaveringly, the decisions of the Third Congress are being loyally carried out. To reorganise the old type of European parliamentary party, in reality reformist, and only lightly glossed over with revolutionary colour, into a new type of party, into a really revolutionary, really Communist party—is an extraordinarily difficult matter. The case of France affords the most striking example of this. To transform the type of party work in everyday life, to reorganise the most common things about it, to convert the party into the real vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat, without drifting away from the masses, but constantly approaching nearer and nearer to them, and raising them to revolutionary consciousness, and to the revolutionary struggle, that is the most difficult, but at the same time the most useful work. If the European Communists fail to carry out this fundamental, internal, profound transformation of the entire structure and activities of their parties, in that interval (probably very short) between the periods of especially intense revolutionary events which many **capitalistic** countries in Europe and America lived through in 1921, and in the beginning of 1922—they will commit a great crime. Fortunately there is no ground for fearing that this will happen. The quiet inconspicuous, unhurried but fundamental work of creating in Europe and America real Communist parties, real revolutionary vanguards of the proletariat, has already begun, and this work is going on.

The political lessons to be learned even from the observation of such a trivial thing as a fox hunt are not without usefulness; on the one hand excessive caution leads to mistakes. On the other, one must not forget that if we substitute sober consideration of conditions by a mere "mood," or the waving of red banners, we may make mistakes altogether irremediable, and may court destruction when even though the difficulties are great, destruction is by no means inevitable.

Paul Levy, in his eagerness to be of service to the bourgeoisie, and **consequently**, to the Second and Two and a Half Internationals, its agents, is now reprinting these works of Rosa Luxemburg in which she adopted a mistaken position. We find our answer to this in a certain very appropriate Russian fable: an eagle may descend lower than a chicken, but the chicken can never rise like the eagle. Rosa Luxemburg was mistaken on the question of the independence of

Poland, she was mistaken in 1903 in her estimate of the Mensheviks; she was mistaken in her theory of the accumulation of capital; she was mistaken in defending the union of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1914 along with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky and others; she was mistaken in her prison writings in 1918 (on coming out of prison, however, at the end of 1918, she corrected a large number of these mistakes herself). But notwithstanding all her mistakes, she was and remains an eagle; and not only will her memory always be highly esteemed by the Communists of all the world, but her biography and the complete collection of her writings (with which the German Communists must not be allowed a delay only partly justifiable by the great sacrifices they have been called upon to make in their difficult struggle) will be useful for the instruction of many generations of Communists in all countries. As for the German Social-Democrats after the 4th of August, 1914—"a foul corpse" is the appellation which Rosa Luxemburg gave them, and with which their name will go down in the history of the international labour movement. But in the backyard of the Labour movement, among the manure piles, chickens like Paul Levy, Scheidemann, Kautsky and all that fraternity, will be especially enraptured by the mistakes of the great Communist. To each his own way.

As regards Serrati, those Italian Communists who are establishing a real party of the revolutionary proletariat in Italy, will now have a striking example of Menshevism before the eyes of the working masses. Not at once, not without many repeated object lessons will the repulsive character of this example reveal itself, but it will be revealed infallibly. Do not tear yourself away from the masses, do not lose patience in the difficult work of the practical exposure of all the Serratis before the working masses; do not succumb to too superficial and dangerous decisions; where Serrati says "A" you must say "minus A"; train the masses inflexibly to a revolutionary world view point and revolutionary action; make practical use of the excellent (although costly) object lesson of Fascism—and victory for Italian Communists is assured.

Levy and Serrati are characteristic not in themselves, but as contemporary examples of the extreme Left wing of petty bourgeois democracy, of "their" camp, the camp of the international capitalists, as against our camp.

"Their" camp, all of them from Gompers to Serrati, rejoices at our misfortunes, they exult, or shed crocodile tears over our retreat, over our "descent," our new economic

policy. Let them exult. Let them throw their clownish antics. To each his own way. We will not give ourselves up to either illusion or despondency. We are not afraid to recognise our mistakes, we are not afraid of the constant repeated work of correcting them—and we will attain the summit. The cause of the international bloc from Gompers to Serratti was a lost cause.

LENIN.

Translated by JESSICA SMITH.



# Further Extract from Lenin's Writings

## ON THE CONNECTION OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION WITH THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE EAST.

(From the Article "Let it be little, but good," 4/3/1923.)

THE general character of our social life is now as follows: we have destroyed capitalist production and have done our utmost to utterly destroy mediæval institutions one of which was landlordism. On this basis we set up the small and smallest peasantry which follows the proletariat because it has confidence in the result of the proletarian revolutionary work. But it is not an easy matter for us to maintain our prestige in the more developed countries, if this confidence is to be our only mainstay until the social revolution is victorious, because, owing to economic conditions, the productive capacity of the small and smallest peasantry (especially under NEP) is on a very low level. Besides, the international situation was such as to put back Russia whose productivity is, on the whole, smaller at present than before the war. This West European capitalist Powers did their utmost (partly consciously and partly driven by the trend of events) to throw us back with the object of making the most of the civil war in Russia for a maximum destruction and disintegration of our country. Such outcome of the imperialist war presented, of course, great advantages to these Powers, for they argued thus: even if we do not succeed in overthrowing the revolutionary regime in Russia, we shall in any case impede its development towards Socialism. From their point of view this argument was quite correct. In the end they had to be satisfied with carrying out only half their task. They did not overthrow the new social order created by the revolution, but at the same time they did not give it an opportunity to make such big strides forward as would have justified Socialist predictions, as would have given an opportunity to rapidly develop all productive forces and all

those possibilities which would have formed the sum total of Socialism, thus proving to everyone that Socialism is a gigantic force and that mankind has entered on a new phase of development pregnant with brilliant possibilities.

The present system of international relations is such that we have now in Europe a state which is in subjection to the victorious States. This State is Germany. Moreover, a number of States belonging to the oldest States of Western Europe, were enabled, on the strength of victory, to make some minor concessions to their oppressed classes, concessions which neutralise the revolutionary movement in these countries and create some semblance of "social peace."

At the same time a number of countries : the East, India, China, etc., were driven out of their usual rut by the events of the recent imperialist war. Their development took a general European capitalist turn. A ferment on the European model set in in these countries, and the whole world can see that the present trend of their development must inevitably lead to a crisis within world capitalism.

Thereby we are at present confronted with the question : can we with our small and smallest peasant production and our general ruin maintain our position until the West European capitalist countries will have accomplished their development towards Socialism? But this development is not coming about by a systematic "growth" of Socialism within these countries, but by means of the exploitation by some States of other States, by the exploitation of the first vanquished country during the capitalist war, coupled with the exploitation of the entire East. On the other hand, the East was finally drawn into the revolutionary movement just because of this great imperialist war and became ultimately part and parcel of the world revolutionary movement.

What then, in the face of this situation, should be the tactics of our country? They must obviously be as follows : we must show great circumspection in order to preserve our workers' power and to keep our small and smallest peasantry under its sway. We have this to our advantage, that the whole world is already becoming imbued with a movement which is bound to result in a Socialist revolution throughout the world. But we have against us that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the whole world into two camps, this split becoming more complicated by the fact that Germany, a country of the most advanced cultural capitalist development, finds it extremely difficult to come out of her

position of subjection. All the capitalist Powers of the so-called West are pecking at her and do not give her a chance to rise again. On the other hand, the entire East with its hundreds of millions of exploited people, driven to the limit of human endurance, is placed in such a way that its physical and material forces do not stand comparison with the physical, material and military forces of any one of the smallest West-European States.

Can we avert a collision with these imperialist States which seems to be imminent? Is there any hope for us that the inner contrasts and conflicts between the victorious imperialist States of the West and the victorious imperialist States of the East will give us for the second time a respite, just as they gave us our first respite at the time when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution, in support of the Russian counter-revolution, came to naught because of dissensions in the camp of Western and Eastern counter-revolutionaries, in the camp of Western and Eastern exploiters—the Japanese and American camp.

It seems to me that the answer to this question must be that the solution, in this instance, depends on a multiplicity of circumstances, and that only a general idea on the issue of the struggle can be formed based on the fact that an enormous majority of the population of the world is being trained and driven to revolutionary struggle by capitalism itself.

The ultimate issue of the struggle depends on the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the world. It is precisely this majority of the population (which during recent years is becoming rapidly involved in the struggle for its own emancipation) which places the nature of the final issue of the world struggle beyond any doubt whatever. In this sense, the final victory of Socialism is fully and unconditionally guaranteed.

But it is not this inevitability of the final victory of Socialism which interests us. Our interest centres in the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet Power, must adopt to be able to frustrate the attempts of the West European counter-revolutionaries to crush us. In order to safeguard our existence until the next military collision between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised States of the world and States

backward in an Eastern fashion, but nevertheless constituting a majority—this majority must be given time and opportunity to become civilised. We, too, are not sufficiently civilised to merge directly into Socialism, although we have for it the political requisites. We must either adopt such tactics or the following policy, if we want to bring about our salvation.

We must endeavour to build up a State in which the working class must remain the leader of the peasantry, in which the latter have confidence in the workers who must eliminate every kind of excess from their inter-relations.

We must place our State apparatus on as economic a basis as possible. We must purge it of every vestige of the excesses handed over to it by the Tsarist regime,—of its bureaucratic capitalist machinery.

But will this not constitute a reign of peasant backwardness?

Not by any means. If we maintain the leadership of the working class over the peasantry, we shall be able, by dint of great economy, to establish such a state of affairs that all the savings in our country will go towards the development of our big machine industry, as well as towards the development of electrification, hydro-peat and for the erection of the Volkhov electric power station, etc.

In this and in this alone is our hope. It is only thus that we shall be able (to use a metaphor) to swap horses; namely, to substitute for the jaded horse of the mujhik, the horse of economies calculated for a ruined peasant country, the horse for which the proletariat is looking without being able to find it—the horse of big machine industry, electrification, the Volkhov electrical power station, etc.

# The Proletarian Struggle for Power in Germany\*

*The last Party conference† had as its task and duty, after the victory of the white dictatorship and the retreat of the proletariat, to examine and to take stock of this turning point in history, and at the same time to pass its verdict on the expediency and correctness of the strategy employed by the revolutionary vanguard. The first thing was done by the Party conference, the second thing was left undone. It was a pleasant self-deception. Every lost battle causes a critical situation in the defeated army, which can only be settled either by a clear analysis and admission of past mistakes and experiences, or by the reviving enthusiasm of new and successful fights. History allows us no time for prolonged illness. It must be cured quickly. The first preliminary condition for a cure is to state frankly the case as it really is.*

## I.—The Historical Significance of the October Defeat.

THE second defeat of the German bourgeoisie by French imperialism disturbed the equilibrium on which the November republic reposed. The parliamentary-republican body of the State had collapsed, and its place was taken by the white dictatorship. The first defeat of the German bourgeoisie in the year 1918 had ended in the overthrow of the monarchy, the second defeat ended in the overthrow of the bourgeois democracy.

The external political causes of the overthrow of the November republic are plainly discernible. The internal political forces which accomplished the overthrow were recruited by those causes, and in this respect they were paralleled by the overthrow of the Kaiser regime. Just as the defeat of German militarism on the battlefields of Northern France had stirred the starving masses in Germany

\* This article was intended for a German periodical and was written immediately after the October defeat. At our request, after the discussion which took place in the E.C.C.I., the author amplified and elucidated his work so as to make it understandable to non-German comrades.

† The conference of the C.C. of the German Communist Party on the 15th of November, 1923.

to a movement which ended in the overthrow of Kaiser Wilhelm, so the victory of French imperialism in the Ruhr was the starting point of tremendous social upheavals. But these social upheavals, while liquidating the bourgeois democracy, did not end in historical progress, in the victory of the social revolution, in the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship; on the contrary, they ended in historical retrogression, in the victory of the counter-revolution, in the domination of fascism, and in the dictatorship of the white generals.

## II.—The Historical Turning Point.

The domination of the petty-bourgeois democracy, the parliamentary system of Germany, relied *externally* on the fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles, and for this reason it had to depend *internally* upon social peace between capital and labour, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This social peace was guaranteed by the co-operation among the employers' associations and the trade unions, by a system of wage agreements and labour arbitrations, which was to prevent any possibility of any wage fights and other labour troubles. In the domain of politics this social peace was expressed in the governmental coalition of the petty-bourgeois parties with the social-democrats. Both in the economic and in the political field, the working class was handed over tied and bound to the ruling class, as an object of exploitation. It goes without saying that such co-operation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, both politically and economically, was possible only after a total renunciation of the class struggle in any shape or form.

Fulfilment of the Treaty and social peace between capital and labour, these were the corner-stones of the bourgeois democracy. If one of these were removed the other would have to go. The petty-bourgeois democracy was hemmed in between two hostile camps. On its right it was confronted by the highly-developed heavy industries which had to look for imperialist expansion in the pursuit of their capitalist aims. On the left it was confronted by the revolutionary sentinels who had to break this social peace in order to emancipate the proletariat.

The trusts and syndicates of the heavy industries, by unparalleled exploitation of the German people, had reached during the world war such a high state of development in the means of production and in industrial technique and organisation that could further be maintained only by the acquisition of new economic spheres. This compelled the

trustified and syndicated industries to seek economic and industrial expansion at any cost. Disarmed Germany, as a nation, had lost all value to the industrial magnates. Germany could only serve them for the purpose of coalition with the capitalists of the victorious countries, as an object of trade. As against the national programme of the bourgeois democracy, which provided for the fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles and for the maintenance of the German Empire, the imperialist industrial magnates advanced the programme of non-fulfilment at the price of the destruction and dissolution of the German empire. It was the aim of the industrial magnates to re-shape the industries of the country in accordance with the natural sources of energy and raw materials that were left in their unrestricted possession. In conformity with these imperialist aims, the raw material resources of the Rhine, of the Saar and of the Ruhr were to be pooled; even at the cost of having to share their possession with the French, Belgian and Luxemburg capitalists, and to this end the Rhine-Ruhr-Saar State was founded.

The German industrial kings had tolerated the petty-bourgeois-social-democratic domination only so long as they had to struggle for the elimination of the obstacles to their imperialist aims. These obstacles consisted of the old traditions of nationalist ideology, and of the proletarian revolutionary movement. Having drowned the proletarian revolutionary movement in blood by means of the petty-bourgeois democratic rule, the big bourgeoisie was now confronted with yet another obstacle to their aims, which consisted of the conservative nationalist forms of property as maintained by the petty-bourgeoisie. The big capitalists proceeded to dispossess the owners of these old forms of property, and this affected millions of small and moderate possessors of property. The period of expropriation of small owners was hypocritically represented by the servile press of the big capitalists (who control 85 per cent. of the German press) as a consequence of the policy of fulfilment of the Treaty, and in this manner the middle classes, and even the upper strata of the working class, were permeated by strong nationalist sentiments and made ripe for the policy of non-fulfilment. The bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois regime began with the defeat of the Wirth government in November, 1922. The Cuno government sponsored the programme of the industrial magnates, the programme of the non-fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles. Thus was removed one of the corner-stones of the petty-bourgeois democracy. The whole burden of the new regime was thus shifted to the one remaining foundation of social peace between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Nevertheless, the

Cuno government was soon to precipitate an acute revolutionary situation. This found its clearest expression on the part of the bourgeoisie in the feverish preparations of the militant organisations of the fascisti, which were backed by the government. The industrial magnates fostered these preparations as never before. These preparations of the counter-revolution were necessarily met by counter-preparations of the revolutionary proletariat. The counter-revolution gave birth to the revolution.

### III.—The Strategy of the Revolutionary Proletariat.

The revolutionary movement in Germany, organised and led by the Communist Party, had its road to a victorious revolution clearly mapped out by the experiences of the years 1918-21. The sanguinary defeats of the revolutionary proletariat in the years 1918-21, starting with the Spartacus revolts and ending with the March action in Middle Germany had their origin in the uneven correlation of the forces of the proletariat that was ready for the revolution, while the great majority of the working class held aloof. The bulk of the proletariat was still believing that their existence was guaranteed by the bourgeois democracy. This fact compelled the revolutionary vanguard to create the necessary preliminary conditions for a victorious revolution by putting itself to the task of gaining the allegiance of the proletarian masses, of winning the bulk of the proletariat.

To this end and to this task was directed the entire strategy of the Party. It was to attain this end that the Communist Party turned its entire activity and organisation to the tactics of the united front. By these tactics it was aimed to wean away from the bourgeois-sodden social-democracy the German proletariat that was still held captive by extremely conservative forms of organisation, and to win it over to Communist ideology and to the class struggle. During the period of the petty-bourgeois-social-democratic regime, the tactics of the united front were an absolute strategical necessity to the revolutionary vanguard. This policy and strategy of the Party was inaugurated and carried out under the slogan : "To the masses! Win the bulk of the proletariat!" This formed the basis of the whole tactics of the Party, to win the bulk of the proletariat for the revolution.

This necessitated not only increased propagandist and educational activity on the subject of the bourgeois democracy, on the bourgeois forms of government, on the causes of poverty and increasing destitution and on the way out of the situation, but it necessitated also an adaptation of the

Communist propaganda to the ideology and illusions of the bulk of the proletariat. Concessions had to be made to the social-democratic frame of mind that existed among the proletariat.

Thus there ensued a chapter in the history of our Party, when the revolutionary ideology of the dictatorship of the proletariat had to be overshadowed to a certain extent by the everyday struggles and by questions of the hour. The simplest and crudest means and forms of revolutionary mass-struggle were adopted in order to attain the aforesaid end. At times the real face of the ultimate revolutionary goal was put under a veil in order to win the masses of the workers by radical opposition policy and activity, to wean them away from the social-democratic leaders and to gain their confidence for the Communist movement. Thus ensued the period of transitional demands and of radical incision into all spheres of labour politics, and of the labour movement within the capitalist order of society. During this period there arose within the Party, and in the International, quite a number of theories and views which placed rather exaggerated hopes upon the further possibilities of, the development of capitalism on the basis of the bourgeois democracy, whose capacity and strength were largely overestimated. It was thought possible to arrange for governmental co-operation and coalition between social-democrats and Communists for a more or less extended period, which would enable the proletariat to fortify steadily its positions of authority and to oust eventually the bourgeoisie. The greater our influence among the masses of the workers, as reflected in our successes at municipal and parliamentary elections, the greater became the illusions anent such possibilities of coalition with the social-democrats. These illusions smack of the theories of evolution instead of revolution, as a solution to the political problems of the proletariat.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these theories and views of cautious steering and manœuvring, the tactics of the united front were fully vindicated during the period of stability of the bourgeois democracy as the proper method for the achievement of our aims and tasks. The best proof of this fact was furnished by the development of the K.A.P.D. (German Communist Labour Party), which is of no importance whatever, even to-day, at the moment of the acutest revolutionary tension in Germany. The period of the tactics of the united front, which in Germany alone has found its full application among the sections of the International, was doubtlessly fraught with great dangers of digression and errors; but the art of strategy consists of the very ability at all times to

keep track of the supreme aims under all situations of extreme danger and never to lose sight of the goal to which the manœuvres are directed. Incidental digressions can then be promptly straightened out again, and this can be accomplished by the vigilant control of the Third International over the revolutionary movement.

The discussions in the International about the October events in Germany have led to a revival of the discussion about the nature of the united front. As we have already pointed out, it was in Germany that the tactics of the united front have found their widest application, and it is, therefore, the best place to gather the actual experiences, so that the practical application of these tactics in Germany might enable us to draw the proper conclusions. The international congresses had to deal time after time with the dangers of the tactics of the united front. These dangers are present for all the parties that apply or try to apply the tactics of the united front. It is, therefore, necessary to outline what the tactics of the united front are, and what they should not be, in order to obviate all possibility of errors and digressions. We will, therefore, try, in brief outline, to enumerate the formulæ and methods to which the tactics of the united front may lead. To wit :

(1) **Agitation** (open letters to the S.P.D. or to the trade unions, inviting them to common action). (2) **Mobilisation of the masses, united front from the bottom** (together with the workers and officials of other parties, factory councils, control committees, proletarian hundreds and kindred movements; common action and campaign committees for wage fights and for transitional demands). (3) **Negotiations between Party committees under pressure from the masses** (joint deliberations for the purpose of common actions by the central committees of parties and trade union bodies after the declaration of the fight by the masses themselves, who have shown their unanimity and solidarity and demanded from their central bodies to start joint deliberations for the common struggle; e.g., the Rathenau campaign, the Cuno strike). (4) **Negotiations among Party chiefs without pressure from the masses, united front from the top** (deliberations of party chiefs for the purpose of promoting the movement of the masses. Such were the negotiations of the three Internationals at Berlin and at Amsterdam, the entry of Communists into the government of Saxony. Such is also the Communist backing of social-democratic governments in the parliaments, e.g., in Saxony, Thuringia, and so on). (5) **Coalition with the social-democrats** for a more or less extended period, for the formation of parliamentary blocs

and coalition governments (joint electoral campaigns and joint lists of candidates. This has not yet been practised in Germany).

The foregoing schedule shows quite plainly the limits of the dangers of the tactics of the united front. Such events or digressions as described in paragraph 5, with the least extension or by their simple application, are bound to lead to an eventual fusion with the social-democrats, and thus transform the purpose of the tactics of the united front into its very opposite. It is the sense and purpose of the tactics of the united front to emancipate the masses of the workers from the social democratic bondage and to lead them into the revolutionary movement. Hence the tactics of the united front should shorten the way towards the revolution. Close connection with the social-democracy, instead of shortening, lengthens the tortuous road of the proletariat.

By far the greatest danger in the application of the tactics of the united front is that the participation, particularly as outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5, strengthens the belief and the illusions of the masses of the workers in regard to bourgeois democracy, parliamentarism and so forth. With the huge masses of the proletariat it is the same as with every big stream, with every big movement in nature. They want their road to run with the least obstacles. As long as there lingers in them a ray of hope, that the bourgeois society might stay their fall, as long as the least illusion persists that parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy will enable them to prolong their existence, the workers shun the fight and are not ready for the revolution.

Hence the tactics of the united front should under no circumstances lead to the strengthening and supporting of democratic illusions among the working class. Every time that the tactics of the united front are applied, it should be the prime necessity and primary law to draw a sharp line of demarcation as to the role and substance of the social-democracy, of the trade unions, etc., in contradistinction to the Communists. There must be a clear and distinct definition of the purpose of the joint actions, precisely setting out the purpose and the possibilities of the forthcoming struggle. At all stages of the struggle, while acting jointly, we must relentlessly expose the half-heartedness and foibles, the cowardice and shortcomings of our partners. There must be brutal frankness in exposing all the mistakes and transgressions against the proletarian masses in the course of the united front. The partnership must immediately be

dissolved the moment that the partner will attempt to betray the united front, or to sell to the enemy the very objective of the struggle. By rigidly drawing the line between themselves and the social-democrats in the application of the tactics of the united front, the Communists will reduce the dangers thereof to a minimum. In applying the tactics of the united front the Communists must always be aware of the fact that the social-democrats are by their nature and role the allies of the bourgeoisie, not of the proletariat. The tactics of the united front contain no dangers whatever to the Communists, if they will but study closely the relations between the parties and the classes and draw the necessary conclusions from such study and observation.

To sum up, the tactics of the united front can only be a means of agitation to mobilise the masses of the workers in their struggles against the bourgeoisie. In all the fights where the social-democrats are compelled by the masses of the workers to work with us, the Communists should spare no efforts to bring into view their own independent and leading part. Under all the circumstances of the united front, and in all the struggles, the Communists should be alive to the fact that the yellow leaders of the social-democracy and of the trade unions were forced by sheer pressure from the masses to join the united front; that these yellow leaders take part in common deliberations and actions but in order to sabotage the mass-actions and betray them at the first opportunity that offers, and to stab the workers in the back. This is the fundamental and cardinal difference between social-democrats and Communists. The Communists join the united front in order to unchain the struggle; the social-democrats enter the united front in order to defeat the struggle or divert it into channels that are harmless to the bourgeoisie. This fundamental difference between social-democrats and Communists is due to a different attitude towards the bourgeois order of society, towards the social-revolution and the proletarian dictatorship. The social-democrats stand solely and wholly on the basis of the bourgeois order of society and reject the social revolution. They are the mortal enemies of the proletarian dictatorship and they utterly repudiate the rule of the proletariat. Hence they are prevented by their very principles from supporting any struggles which menace the bourgeois society and promote the strength of the proletariat and its confidence of the ultimate victory and of the eventual establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. By taking a lead in a revolutionary struggle, or in the proletarian class struggle in general, the social-democrats would sign their own death-warrant. Hence it follows that the social-democrats can by no means serve

the interests of the proletariat, and in any serious clash between the respective class interests of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat they will be bound to take the part of the bourgeoisie, for the preservation of the capitalist system of exploitation, for the predatory policies of imperialism and for the bourgeois order of society. It is the very task of the tactics of the united front to demonstrate these facts to the masses of the workers and to hammer them into their consciousness in season and out of season. The tactics of the united front are the method of accentuating the natural contradiction between the yellow social-democracy and trade union bureaucracy and the masses of the workers affiliated with them. This contradiction should be fully revealed, thus widening the cleavage between the honest proletarian fighters and the treacherous yellow bureaucrats. Thus the tactics of the united front imply no social peace, no community of work with the social-democracy, but the keen-edged weapon of the class struggle for a relentless fight against the enemies of the proletariat in its own camp.

The tactics of the united front do not mean any alliance with the social-democracy for a more or less extended period for the conduct of common policies, since the very nature of the social-democracy and its attitude towards the bourgeois society render such a policy quite impossible. He who entertains a different conception of this fighting method has failed to grasp it at all. Social peace and common work with the social-democracy, with the allies and flunkies of the bourgeoisie, would mean social peace and alliance with the bourgeoisie itself, with the deadly enemies of the proletariat. The tactics of the united front are not a manœuvre of evolution, but of revolution.

#### IV.—The High Tide of Revolution.

The fight in the Ruhr, although ostensibly waged by the bourgeoisie in the shape of passive resistance against the imperialist aspirations of France, was in reality nothing else but a campaign of spoliation on the part of the big German capitalists against the old bourgeois forms of property, and at the cost of the existence of the German proletariat. Since the advent of the Cuno government there was a catastrophic collapse of the exchange rate of the German mark which dropped from 8,000 to 5 or 6 billions to the dollar. Already these figures alone indicate the unspeakable spoliation of the large masses of the people in Germany. The inflation of currency had assumed such proportions that all the printing presses in Germany proved unequal to the task of turning out

the necessary quantities of paper money. The heavy industries introduced their own currency and for many months they paid the wages and salaries of their workers, employees and officials solely at the cost of the paper on which their money was printed. This development extended far beyond the circles of the proletariat, causing a general mood of panic and despair. As a matter of fact, for weeks and weeks there was at all no possibility to pay wages and salaries, on account of the scarcity of paper money in spite of the unparalleled productivity of the printing press of the State.

The fortunes of the petty-bourgeois-social-democratic government were most intimately bound up with the credit of the mark. Hence it lost all its followers among the wide masses of the people. The petty-bourgeoisie in its despair went over to fascism, hoping thereby to save itself from "Marxism" as represented by the social-democracy, which it held responsible for the catastrophe. The bulk of the proletariat, hitherto swayed by the social-democracy and chained to the petty-bourgeois regime by the reformist trade union leaders, were now going over in masses to the Communist movement.

At the outset the Party adopted the right policy of giving an aim and purpose and a sphere of activity to this change in the ideology of the masses, by the formation of organs of the united front, *e.g.*, the revolutionary factory councils' movement, the control committees' movement, and so on. The activity of the organs of the united front, of the proletarian hundreds, factory councils and control committees, contained in itself the seed of revolution from their very inception. They shook the ramparts of the old bourgeois property privileges; instead of social peace, they declared for the relentless class struggle and were in the sharpest opposition to the authorities of the State. This lent quite a distinctive substance and significance to the united front tactics of the Party. It carried the united front far beyond the realm of pure propaganda. At this stage there was no necessity for adaptation to the social-democratic ideology, since the bulk of the workers were already following the Communist ideology. This was deliberately and consciously attained by the propaganda of the proletarian hundreds for the armed revolt. It soon became evident that even those parts of the proletariat who were still clinging to the old social-democratic organisations were ready to tread the path of revolution. This was demonstrated at its strongest in Saxony, in Thuringia and in the Ruhr, where the proletarian hundreds and the control committees were made up of social-democratic and

Communist workers on terms of parity. The acme of the ideological preparation for the civil war was reached by our propaganda in the anti-fascist movement, in the latter part of July of last year.

Already in the anti-fascist propaganda the lines were clearly drawn between the two hostile camps that were preparing for the fight. The action that was inaugurated under the slogan of the united front drove the social-democracy into the fascist camp. A solid fascist bloc was formed by the counter-revolution, from the social-democracy to the Chauvinist Volkspartei. The action of the anti-fascist week had to be carried out without any compromise with the social-democracy, and in the bitterest opposition to it. This action revealed for the first time that the bulk of the workers were breaking away from the social-democracy and joining the ranks of the Communist Party. This observation whipped the counter-revolutionary front into closer union. Already then the social-democratic leaders were compelled to declare openly for the counter-revolution and against the social-revolution. The state of defence, the ban on demonstrations, the suppression of our newspapers and publications, the dissolution of the national committee of the German factory councils, the prohibition of the proletarian hundreds, the suppression of the control committees, the innumerable trials instituted against the national committee of our Party and the editors and other officials on the charge of high treason —these and similar facts of that period demonstrated the danger that was felt by the bourgeois society at the turn of events.

The economic and social circumstances were constantly supplying the objective basis for the maturity of the revolution. Our huge demonstrations throughout the country, in spite of all persecution and proscription, rendered the working class tremendously conscious of its strength, thus increasing its desire for the revolutionary rising. In the days of June and July, the streets of the large cities were entirely dominated by the proletariat. Communist demonstrations were frequently continued throughout the night, and addressed by street corner speakers, such was the familiar picture in all the large cities. Wage demands and wage negotiations were no longer carried on by trade union leaders at round tables, but by demonstrative action of the workers at the factories, who would assemble demonstratively in the factory yards and march through the streets under red banners, carrying a gallows-cart as a symbol of their revolutionary determination. Demonstration followed demonstration in

the streets and public squares, for all the crafts and industries arranged their own particular demonstrations.

The whole of the bourgeois press, the newspapers of all the parties in July and August were full of extensive comments on the imminent and inevitable civil war that was to break out. There was lively discussion in the newspapers on the question of the forthcoming new revolution, and comparisons were drawn with the November days of 1918. Yet it was the universal consensus of opinion that the second German revolution would take on a different aspect from the first. In all circles the Communists were considered and recognised as the next party to rule, and the proletarian dictatorship as the next form of government. In spite of the brutal persecution and suppression, the Communist Party in those days enjoyed great respect and extraordinary confidence, which extended even to bourgeois circles.,

The solid determination of the proletariat to snap the shackles of the bourgeois peace and of the petty-bourgeois-social-democratic domination expressed itself in the tidal outbreaks of strikes in the Ruhr and in Upper Silesia, and finally in the political mass-strike which led to the overthrow of the Cuno government. Already then, it was shown by these strike movements that the situation at that time was such that the simplest wage-fight in Germany led to the most far-reaching readjustments of the political forces. In the Ruhr as well as in Upper Silesia the striking workers invariably adopted the most far-reaching political measures. In most of the strike districts the police were disarmed and their functions were taken over by the striking workers; municipal councils and authorities were dissolved and their places were taken by the revolutionary factory councils, who at the same time led the strikes. Against these gigantic strike movements, which were backed by local revolts, the authorities of the State were perfectly powerless.

In many provinces the starving masses armed themselves and went into the country to procure the necessary means of subsistence. This occurred particularly in districts where small towns were in close relations with the rural population, e.g., in Thuringia, in Saxony, and so forth, particularly among the textile workers. In these towns the starving workers requisitioned trucks and carts to deliver the requisite foodstuffs and provisions from districts near and far. Under the influence of these hunger marches, food contracts were signed and large voluntary contributions were raised among the rural and urban population, which, coupled with the

and the revolutions were upsetting the bourgeois "law and order". Some preparations were organised among the middle class who were short of food themselves, also among the large army of the labour force of the small and medium towns, and these brought themselves to the fields and took the necessary food supplies from the landowners. In face of all this, it resulted in this of outbreaks of peasant and starvation in Spain. So Spanish art had to consist in the starving masses of Spain. A situation of very small cities and villages, where relations among the classes, the rich and the poor, was poverty, power less and had to take over Congress in its own bankruptcy.

## V.—The Attitude of the K.P.D. and of the Comintern to the Revolutionary High Tide.

The revolutionary feeling among the German proletariat ran so high in the days of May-July, and it was so widespread in extent, that the time seemed ripe for an immediate outbreak of open revolution. It was the duty of the C.P. as the revolutionary vanguard to furnish the goal and direction to these spontaneous outbreaks of the proletarian struggle, and to the militant spirit thereby engendered. At the same time steps should have been taken to organise our own militant troops and to mobilise and organise them into strong fighting units. Nevertheless, until July these tasks were discussed only theoretically and by way of propaganda. Even the Enlarged Executive in July dealt with the questions of fascism and the white dictatorship in Germany from the standpoint of propagandist activity within the fascist camp that was to go on for some time to come. All the problems were discussed at the Executive meeting from a purely theoretical and propagandist standpoint, and nobody thought of the immediate prospects.

It was only after the mass strike in July that a change took place in our Party and in the Executive. Only then was conceived that the time was drawing nigh for a decision between the white or red dictatorship. The Party then began to work upon a solution of the problem of arming the proletariat, as well as the problem of strategic and military organisation and preparation. The whole Party apparatus and all the forces were concentrated on the work of military organisation and mobilisation. Since this mobilisation followed directly out of the propaganda and was to be transformed into a military organisation at short notice, it was bound to be carried out with excessive zeal. All the existing bridges to the bulk of the proletariat, e.g., the united front organs, factory councils, action committees and so forth, in which the workers participated without any party distinction, were now neglected and the whole activity was dedicated to the preparation and mobilisation of the vanguard. Nay, we went even further than that. We even went out of our way in those days to stifle deliberately any desire that was manifested by the proletariat to engage in mass actions, strikes and so on. It was thought that these strikes would weaken the "decisive fight." Similarly we stifled any armed revolts that broke out spontaneously, in order to prevent a premature defeat of isolated districts.

Everything was staked on the *date* which was to occur dur-

ing the first half of November. The governmental experiment in Saxony was to constitute the political and strategical plan of the advance. The object was to reply to the threats of the counter-revolutionary fascisti against Saxony and Thuringia by taking part in the government, which would enable us to mobilise and arm the masses and to render them capable of resistance, so that they might take up the fight against the legal and illegal counter-revolutionary forces. This participation in the government was soon followed by imperial action against Saxony, by an invasion of the reichswehr, by the unseating of the government and by the dismissal of those officials and bureaucrats who were closely related to the proletariat. The action of the imperial government in removing the constitutional government of Saxony, the state of defence that had been previously proclaimed throughout the empire, the suppression of our newspapers and so forth, constituted *the date* set in our strategic plan for the beginning of the fight against the counter-revolution. Nevertheless, the fight was called off at the last moment on the plea that the correlation of forces was unfavourable to the revolutionary proletariat.

## VI.—The Saxon Experiment.

The attempt was made in many sections of the International to represent the Saxon experiment as an object-lesson of the wrong application of the tactics of the united front, and even as a positive proof of the perverse and mistaken nature of the tactics of the united front in general. It cannot be gainsaid that big mistakes were committed in the course of the Saxon experiment. Nevertheless we ought to examine whether the whole policy of the experiment, its starting point and its execution, was wrong or right in principle.

The K.P.D. and the Comintern already on previous occasions had to deal with the problem of government in Saxony. It was the unanimous opinion of the K.P.D. after the Leipsic conference of the Party that the question of Communists joining the Saxon government could be entertained on the sole condition that, as against the means of force of the bourgeoisie and of the State bureaucracy, a counterpoise would be formed in the shape of a congress of factory councils created under the pressure of the masses, or of an executive committee elected by such a congress. The state of affairs in Saxony was such that the social-democrats could not rule by themselves, without either the bourgeoisie or the Communists. We declined to join the government without special

guarantees and terms. In answer to the invitation of the S.P.D. to participate with it in the government, we published ten sharply formulated conditions on which depended our entry into the government. These conditions were declined by the S.P.D. Thus came about our support to the Zeigner government. The sanguinary conflicts at Leipsic, Dresden, Bautzen and so on, between the unemployed and the police, the general cowardliness and vacillation of the social-democrats in the government, caused us to make our attitude public and to demand guarantees in the shape of an ultimatum, in order to render such crimes against the working class impossible. At the same time the Party insisted on vigorous measures against the fascisti, and in this connection, on disarming the counter-revolutionaries and on arming and recognising officially the proletarian hundreds. In order to acquaint the masses with these demands and bring the pressure of the masses to bear upon the S.P.D., an emergency programme was drawn up, for which an extensive campaign had already been started in the factories.

Thus matters stood in Saxony when the C.C., of the K.P.D. and the Comintern agreed that, in order to release the revolutionary forces in Germany, the Party should join the government solely on condition of arming the proletariat. By this decision our Saxon comrades were forced to join the government, even before the recently started action for the mobilisation of the masses could be completed, so that the negotiations about joining the government had to be conducted in a parliamentary way, by means of diplomatic negotiations between our party leaders, the Saxon government circles and the Saxon social-democracy.

What did this entry into the government mean? It did not mean that a big Communist programme, or at least a Labour programme, was to be carried out in a parliamentary way by joining the government, or that on the grounds of the bourgeois democracy the social-democracy could be exposed before the masses; we entered into the government solely in order to saddle the imperial government with the responsibility for its open fight against the Saxon proletariat. The sole purpose of joining the government was to arouse the growing revolutionary force that was already manifesting itself in the country, and to concentrate it on the defence of the Saxon proletariat. The revolutionary crisis was so acute that all the forms of the class struggle had to be applied. The closest unity of the entire proletariat of Saxony in the fight against the imperial government was to be followed by the closest unity of the whole of the German proletariat for the support

of the working class of Saxony. The united defensive action of the workers of Saxony was to be the prelude to the united fight of the whole of the German proletariat.

Every member of the Party was convinced that a defensive action of the Saxon proletariat would lead to an armed revolt, and the Party reckoned that the outcome of the defensive fight in Saxony would be the fight for political power throughout the country. The decision to join the government in Saxony meant nothing else but a fulfilment of the decisions of the Fourth Congress, in which we read :

"Also a workers' government brought into existence by a parliamentary constellation, which is thus purely of parliamentary origin, can furnish the occasion for a revival of the revolutionary labour movement. Of course, the birth of a real workers' government, and the further maintenance of this government in the conduct of its revolutionary politics, would be bound to lead to the bitterest fight, and eventually to civil war, with the bourgeoisie. The mere attempt of the proletariat to create such a workers' government would clash at the outset with stoutest resistance of the bourgeoisie. The slogan of the workers' government is therefore the suitable one to consolidate the ranks of the proletariat and to lead to revolutionary struggles."

The object of the Communist in joining the Saxon government was to inaugurate revolutionary struggles, to weld the masses of the workers for the fight against the imperial executive, and to mobilise the whole of the working class for this fight. The second object was, in so far as it was possible during the few days of participation in the government, to accelerate and to carry out the arming of the working class. First of all, the police had at least to be neutralised, and the weapons in possession of the State had to be transferred into the hands of the workers. To these principal objects everything else had to be subordinated.

What of these aims and objects of the Saxon experiment was accomplished? The assault of the imperial executive against Saxony followed immediately. This object was doubtlessly achieved. But the main objects, the revolutionary rising, did not follow. The reasons for this we shall endeavour to find in our subsequent examination.

The Saxon experiment was a failure, and just now we would like to point out one lesson of this experiment. The

principal mistake in the Saxon experiment was that the government was joined not as a result of mass mobilisation and under the pressure of the mobilised masses of the workers, but on the basis of purely parliamentary negotiations and negotiations with the chiefs of the social-democratic party, hoping that by joining the government the mobilisation of the masses would be accomplished. This was a great delusion. It was quickly shown that the entry of the Communists into the government did not make the masses of the social-democratic workers more militant, but on the contrary, had a lulling effect on them. It was also shown that before our ministers in the government had time to familiarise themselves with the nature of the reactionary apparatus of the State, the nine days of their governmental splendour were at an end. Thus the hope that through the government the workers could be quickly mobilised and armed turned out a will-o'-the-wisp.

The opposite course should have been followed. Our comrades, before joining the government, should have already armed and mobilised the masses. Only upon this condition they should have joined the government. The Saxon experiment teaches us that there can be no talk of applying the decisions of the Fourth Congress in regard to the formation of a workers' government, or of a workers' and peasants' government, under the present correlation of classes and forces in Germany, unless the working class has previously been sufficiently armed and prepared, so that it might take up the struggle for power immediately after the formation of the workers' government. This means that the application of the resolution of the Congress about the workers' government or workers' and peasants' government, in so far as Germany is concerned, implies that the workers need not wait for the formation of such a government until the whole of the proletariat shall be thoroughly alive to the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, but at all events there must be a preliminary gathering of sufficient forces of the proletariat to take up the fight for the conflict of power.

Hence the workers' or the workers' and peasants' government in Germany cannot be an experiment of long duration, or a transitional basis from the bourgeois democracy to the proletarian dictatorship, but it must be the direct mobilisation of the proletariat for the proletarian dictatorship. As to this we have been given a thorough lesson by the Saxon experiment. Out of the foregoing it is clear that the idea of the decision of the Fourth World Congress about the workers' and peasants' government is not wrong fundamentally, but in re-

gard to German circumstances it is bound up with quite definite postulates and preliminary conditions which must be fulfilled before this form of the tactics of the united front can be applied.

In carrying out the Saxon experiment the German Communists committed yet a number of other mistakes of a minor nature, but what are not of less importance to the application of the tactics of the united front. In all their actions, in all their speeches, in public propaganda and in parliament, the comrades of the K.P.D. from the very outset adopted a defensive attitude and shrank from any offensive action. The whole press, the leaflets, the speeches, the entire propaganda was confined to pitiful whining and lamenting over the proletariat to the bourgeois democracy, to the rights of the bourgeois parliament and of the "constitutional" Saxon government against the aggression of the imperial executive that was violating the sacredness of the constitution and of the democracy. This propaganda was devoid of any revolutionary spirit and of any revolutionary swing. The whole propaganda was confined to pitiful whining and lamenting over the arrogance and violence of the white generals. This propaganda did not foster the militant spirit and the desire to fight, but weakness and despondency.

By this propaganda the Communists did not assume the leadership of the social-democratic masses, but became the captives of the counter-revolutionary spouters of the Left social-democrats, who indulged in radical speeches, but stranded and rejected any attempt to fight and any preparations for the fight. When joining the government the C.C. of the Communist Party formulated 14 demands which were submitted to the S.P.D., but were all rejected. Thus it was clear from the outset that the S.P.D. was not prepared to fight. The Communists should under no circumstances have been silent on this, but should have published these facts broadcast among the masses and set them in motion against the social-democratic saboteurs. All these blunders of omission, and the whole erroneous procedure in the application of the tactics of the united front, was bound to lead to the collapse of the Saxon experiment.

In spite of the fact that the imperial executive had announced its intentions before the Communists joined the government, nevertheless our Party took no steps to mobilise the masses directly. Neither a congress of the Saxon factory councils was called nor a conference of the parties and of the trade unions, which should have discussed

and resolved upon defensive measures against the imperial executive. On the other hand, a conference of action committees of the consumers' unions, trade unions, factory councils, etc., was convened for the 21st of October at Chemnitz to receive the reports of the government on their activities for the delivery of foodstuffs, for the relief of the unemployed and half-timers—in short, a conference for the discussion of financial and social measures. It was a conference to advertise the virtues of the government. This conference met at the very moment when the reichswehr troops were marching in from all the borders of the state. A meeting of our Party executive, a few hours before the opening of this conference, decided to introduce a resolution for the general strike which should have developed into a fight against the imperial executive. Bear in mind that this resolution was to be submitted to a conference that was called for economic and social purposes, and in which the militant organisations of the proletariat were either feebly represented or entirely unrepresented. However, this conference was not slow in showing that it was in no mood for the starting of the fight, and all motions for a general strike and other means of fighting had to be withdrawn.

Here the great faults and shortcomings of the German Communists were revealed: neither during the Saxon experiment nor at the moment of decision had they shown their ability to so organise the contemplated fight that it should really be taken up. The Saxon experiment, which was to be the prelude to a revolutionary rising of the German proletariat, turned out to be a low parliamentary comedy from its first hour to its miserable end.

The experiment does not even bid the consolation of any strong disruption of the social-democracy, and consequent increase of the Communist ranks by the influx of large numbers from the masses of the working class. The results of the municipal elections in Saxony go to show that the masses disappointed in the social-democracy did not go over to the Communists alone, but that equally great numbers went over to the fascisti. This is a thing that would have been impossible if the Communist participation in the government had not been accompanied by the aforesaid mistakes.

## VII.—The Strategy at the Acute Revolutionary Stage.

The strategy of the opposing camp of the champions of private property and capitalist enterprise, including all the

bourgeois parties down to the social-democrats, including the trade union bureaucrats as well as the trust magnates and junkers, consisted of the plan of placing in the hands of the white generals the entire machinery of the State and its political, bureaucratic, juridical, legislative, military and police functions and authorities, in order to save themselves from the revolution. The generals worked upon the military plan of "hitting the enemy where he ain't," i.e., of striking at the enemy before he had time to unfold his forces. The entry of our Saxon comrades into the government was followed on the heels by the proclamation of the imperial executive, and this compelled us to transfer our November date to October. Thus the enemy hit us before we had time to prepare and to advance.

The Party now had to decide whether to accept or to evade the fight. The decision was to depend on the outcome of the Chemnitz conference mentioned in the foregoing chapter. After the refusal of the conference, the Party decided to evade the imperial action against Saxony without a struggle. But the enemy had more than one string to his bow. The imperial action against Saxony was followed on the heels by the outlawing of the Communist Party, by the prohibition of all Party enterprises, by the arrest and imprisonment of many thousands of Party officials, and by the suppression of the whole of the Communist literature and newspapers. The proclamation of martial law throughout the empire, the prohibition of the right to strike and similar outbursts of the white dictatorship came in rapid succession. All these successive blows were received by the Party without a struggle. The mobilisation of the revolutionary working masses that had been in progress was abruptly terminated. From a state of extreme buoyancy the Party went to the other extreme of despair, and the word was passed around to avoid engaging in any struggle. Special messengers were dispatched to such places where fighting was in progress, as at Hamburg, to order an immediate cessation of the fighting. This sudden change of front, this swing from one extreme to another, could only provoke sore disappointment and bitterness among the masses, who turned their anger not only against the white dictatorship, but also against the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard, against the leadership of the Communist Party. These facts make it incumbent upon the Party to thoroughly probe and establish the mistakes that have been committed.

**VIII.—Faults and Defects which Led to the October Defeat.**

After every defeat of an army it is the duty and task of the leaders of the defeated troops to effect a sharp analysis of the mistakes committed in the course of the military operations, to investigate them, to establish the causes of the mistakes and to admit them, in order to avoid their repetition in the future. This analysis and investigation of mistakes is not undertaken as a service to historic justice and to "pure truth," but its purpose is rather to revise wrong attitudes and to look for the true line of principle and tactics, which is the primary postulate for future victories. This alone should be the guiding line and the task of our investigations.

1. The Party and the Comintern failed to recognise in time and assess at its proper value the significance of the political changes which took place since the beginning of the Cuno government marked the beginning of the dissolution. As we have already pointed out in the previous chapters, the Cuno government marked the beginning of the dissolution and breaking up of the bourgeois-democratic epoch, and its place could be taken only by a dictatorship of one kind or another. This political situation was not taken into sufficient consideration by the Party, and the proper conclusions were not promptly drawn from these changes. It is true that the international conferences at Essen in January, and at Frankfort in May, called attention to the dangers of the Ruhr occupation in general, and to the consequent international complications and war menaces in particular, warning the Communists of all the fraternal sections of the grave menace of sanguinary conflicts. The same took place at the Enlarged Executive in July last year, but all the decisions taken by that conference were only of propagandist importance and did not constitute any direct preparations for organising and arming the fighting ranks for the forthcoming civil war. It was only in September and October that the concrete solution was undertaken, when the fighting organisations of the revolutionary vanguard were created and to some extent quite imperfectly prepared. The preparations for the armed rising, which were not undertaken before the enemy was already in the field and dealing out his blows to the proletariat, drove our own ranks to an over-excitement of despair, so that no clear picture could be obtained of the position of our forces.

2. The Party endeavoured to postpone the spontaneous mass movements from the month of October to the "final"

blow, in the belief that the forces of the proletariat should not be exhausted in isolated actions, so that they might be put in the field at the proper moment. Yet this restraint acted as a solvent upon the enthusiasm of the proletarian masses. This was aggravated by the fact that after the Cuno strike and the formation of the big coalition the large masses of the S.P.D. workers and their leaders placed their confidence in the government, especially in Hilferding, the "Marxist," which conjured up new illusions as to the way out of the desperate situation. The tense situation was doubtlessly relieved after the Cuno strike, when the new government of the big coalition resorted to the manœuvre of index-wages and salaries, of stabilised currency and so forth. The Party took hardly any notice of the receding tide of the movement, which set in already after the overthrow of the Cuno government in August. It was far too busy with arming the masses and with the preparations for the civil war and for the armed rising.

3. The tactics of the united front, which are a necessary adjunct to our activity and to our movement during periods of propaganda and social rest, should be of even much greater importance during the acute revolutionary epoch. And it was in this very respect that all opportunities were neglected during the time between August and October. This is particularly true of the preparations for passive resistance by means of the general strike. Nothing was undertaken by the Party during the period of preparation to promote and to mobilise the united front organs of the proletariat, such as the factory councils, the control committees and the proletarian hundreds. Nothing was done to keep them in training and to bring in the masses. All this should have been the first postulate for the decisive blow. This, however, was not the case, for the whole of our activity was confined to drilling and repairing the circumscribed circle of the Party apparatus for the anticipated fights. This enabled the social-democrats during the few weeks' existence of the big coalition to regain the confidence of their followers and to arouse in them new illusions and hopes as to the continued existence of the bourgeois society. In the over-excitement of the Party mobilisation for the armed rising the political mobilisation of the large proletarian masses was shifted into the background, ignored and neglected. This was one of the gravest and worst mistakes committed during the period of the mobilisation of the Party forces for the armed rising. Thus, this action was essentially a Party action, not the fight of the large masses of the workers.

Consequently, the blame for the October defeat does not attach to the tactics of the united front as hitherto applied to the Party, as asserted by the Berlin opposition, but rather to the contrary, the non-application and ignoring of the tactics of the united front were two of the causes of the October defeat. As we already pointed out the tactics of the united front during the October period consisted merely of a wrong and unilateral application in the shape of participation in the Saxon government.

4. Yet by far the gravest and greatest mistake was the stake on the final fight. The whole course of events, as we have already described, goes to show that there was a state of extreme revolutionary feeling in October, but not to such an extent that everything could be staked on the final fight. Hence the Party, along with the preparations for the armed rising, should at the same time have prepared the masses for partial actions and partial fights, of for fights on the largest basis and with less aggressive means and partial aims, in order to be able to organise a resistance to the advance of the white dictatorship. All the mistakes of the October defeat emanated after all from this wrong position. We shall find it necessary to devote another chapter of our essay to an examination of this position.

5. Another mistake was the manner in which the retreat was carried out. The revolutionary vanguard in its retreat, as is necessary and proper in actions of retreat, did not retreat before the enemy as a despondent rearguard, but even in the retreat it led the way and was followed by the bulk of the army who were in a state of utter confusion. Even when forced to retreat, the revolutionary vanguard must retain in its hands the leadership of the masses, if it does not wish to lose all prestige among the masses for a long time to come. The masses have faith in Communism not because of the sweet sound of its name, nor on account of Utopian illusions for the remote future, but solely because of the militant readiness of the Communist troops in all the necessary and bitter daily struggles. The bulk of the proletariat has neither knowledge of the laws of strategy nor faith in the revolutionary force, if these are not demonstrated clearly in the course of actual fights. If the Communist sympathies of the masses are to be retained, they must themselves become convinced of the need for Communism. A sudden retreat before the enemy and an unchallenged advance of the enemy are bound to destroy the confidence and faith in the fighting spirit of the Communists and to strengthen

the self-confidence and fighting spirit of the enemy. The retreat without a fight was one of the worst mistakes of the K.P.D.

## IX.—The Substance of the Civil War in Germany.

### a. *The Armed Rising and the Masses.*

The fightless retreat cannot be explained by organisational, military and technical defects, and still less by the general unfavourable correlation of forces, which was much more unfavourable when the Party resolved on the fight than it was at the moment of decision. The mistakes lie solely and exclusively in the wrong tactical attitude of the party, in the struggle for winning the majority of the proletariat, which was considered the first preliminary to success. These mistakes resulted from a wrong conception, from a wrong theoretical view of the substance of civil war and armed rising, and from a wrong conception of the part to be played by the Party in these struggles.

It is one of the arguments of the defenders of the fightless retreat that the fight in October could culminate in an armed rising only to the extent that any strike or demonstration might end in armed rising. This thesis was refuted directly by a number of facts which occurred in the October days. From Stettin to Kiel, from Flensburg to Veckensack, the wharf and dock workers were on strike, it was a general strike of unparalleled magnitude for the water district, and yet, with the exception of Hamburg, it did not come to an armed rising. In Middle Germany the miners were on strike and it came to no armed rising. This is sufficient evidence that in those days we had a perfect choice among numerous means and methods of fighting, from the simplest and most harmless to the hardest and most complicated. It was entirely in our power to offer resistance to the enemy, and by those means and organisations which we would find expedient and necessary at every particular district and at every locality. But on account of the aforesaid theoretical position, with which we shall yet deal later on, we believed in nothing else but the armed rising.

The cardinal mistake was that the Party had staked everything on the "final fight" for the conquest of political power with arms in its hands, while repudiating the necessity and possibility of partial fights and partial aims with less aggressive yet under the circumstances more efficient means and methods of fighting.

One of the most favoured explanations for the October defeat is the theory of the correlation of forces, with which we shall also deal in a separate chapter. Just now let us examine the theory of the wavering element in the proletarian masses and in the impoverished middle classes. The thesis for this theory is as follows: the mood of the masses is no longer in favour of the bourgeois democracy, but it is not yet in favour of the proletarian dictatorship. This is the theory of the vacuum, which is an easy but shallow explanation. History knows of no vacuum. The bourgeois democracy could only be replaced either by the fascist or by the proletarian dictatorship. No one will dispute the fact that the fascist dictatorship, and particularly the dictatorship of generals in Germany, had but a weak ground and was by no means a mass movement. The large masses, including the petty peasantry, if given the choice, would overwhelmingly prefer the red dictatorship to the white. Let us recall the mass-mobilisation of the petty peasants in the Spartacus struggles, at the time of the overthrow of the Soviet government in Bavaria, and on many other occasions in the past, when the largest masses responded to the call for the fight against the red peril, whereas nowadays, even during the severest fights as at Hamburg, even those elements refused to lend any assistance in the suppression of the proletariat. The paltry few hundred famished S.P.D. workers who hied to the "banners" to save their fatherland were perfectly negligible. And when we think of it that at Hamburg, in the course of a 60-hour fight, over an extensive territory, there was not a single traitor or informer found among the whole population, while on the other hand the fighters met with every aid and assistance on the part of the population, we may safely say that the mood of the masses is quite ripe for the proletarian dictatorship.

#### b. *The Final Victory.*

The most important argument of the defenders of the fightless retreat is the assertion that the general correlation of forces was not favourable to the fight. A picture is drawn as though a fight in October would have inflicted a "decisive defeat," and that the fight should not be taken up unless the "final victory" was so many per cent. assured. To my mind this represents revolutionary mathematics about the final victory at a period in the civil war when the first skirmishes have not yet been fought. This betokens a total ignorance of the substance and structure of the civil war and of the fight for political power as it is bound to shape itself in Germany, in accordance with the whole structure of society and the correlation of classes.

This theory of the final fight, which led to the ill-advised strategy of the October days, puts the end of the fight before its beginning and starts upon the assumption that the fight for political power would be decided in a few days' fighting, in one heroic armed struggle. Even at the favourable attitude of the masses, as it was unmistakably manifested in the October days, the beginning of the armed rising would have led to a long struggle, to many vicissitudes of petty skirmishes during many weeks, which would reflect the motley nature of the present correlation of forces in the various districts of Germany. The military operations of that period could at most lead only to local successes in some districts.

Nevertheless, the military operations of the Party were calculated on the formation of large forces with far-going strategical aims, with the advance of entire regiments and divisions led from the centre, and operating upon plans drawn by staff headquarters, so that in a few days the proletarian dictatorship would be established throughout Germany.

In opposition to this attitude, I represent the view that for many weeks the armed rising in Germany would not extend beyond local operations and would represent a motley picture of the varying political correlation of forces in the various districts of Germany. Besides the proletarian fighters and troops, all kinds of counter-revolutionary bands would form around the police and reichswehr. Even under favourable circumstances, a homogeneous rule could be formed only in Saxony and Thuringia and in Bavaria, in Saxony and Thuringia as the proletarian dictatorship, and in Bavaria as a fascist dictatorship. In all the other districts we would have to deal with prolonged partisan warfare, against which the strategy of big armies would be powerless and would have to yield in the end. We should, therefore, consider the Hamburg struggle not as a partial fight towards the final victory, but merely as the beginning of the partisan war which must go on for a longer or shorter period before the conquest of power. Therefore, the first thing is not the final fight, but the starting of the civil war, out of whose development and operations the final fight would eventually emerge. In the civil war in Germany, we see a protracted fight waged by the classes of society with varying success, with all the economic, political and military means of power, from the mass demonstration and the general strike to the armed rising, and not a heroic battle in the field for two or three days that would in a few hours deliver the victory into our lap.

The co-ordination of all the proletarian means and methods of fighting is the first preliminary to success. The neglect of one of the districts during the period of preparation or during the period of operations will lead to defeats.

### c. *The Question of Arming.*

One of the important arguments adduced by the defenders of the fightless retreat is the assertion that the proletariat was not sufficiently prepared for the armed struggle. This argument raises the whole problem of arming the proletariat during the period of preparation. Here the defenders of the retreat endeavour to show by statistics that the enemy was better equipped with arms and weapons and that therefore the correlation of forces was unfavourable to us. This again is mathematics of doubtful value to revolutionary struggles. We shall come to this subject again when dealing with the question of the correlation of forces. At this juncture we would merely wish to elucidate a few points.

It stands to reason that the enemy, being in possession of the authority of the State, will always be better equipped than the revolutionary masses, in regard to military organisation as well as technique and strategy. The State apparatus, working in all legality, and backed by science, technical progress, industry and high finance, will always be better equipped than the revolutionary vanguard that has been forced into illegality and is persecuted and surrounded by thousands of spies. Of course, the question of arming is not a subordinate one, but it is not the question of all questions in the revolutionary struggle. We are taught by the history of revolution of all times that the question of arming was not solved *before* the decisive fight, but *during* the decisive fight. In all revolutionary conflicts the revolutionaries had to seize the weapons from those who possessed them, from the counter-revolutionaries. It is, therefore, entirely wrong when the defenders of the retreat are trying to explain it by statistics on the question of arms. To measure the correlation of forces by the question of arms would mean to postpone the armed rising to St. Never's Day.

### d. *The Unfavourable Correlation of Forces.*

The defenders of the fightless retreat explain the October defeat as due to an "unfavourable correlation of forces" for the proletariat, to the strong consolidation of the counter-

revolutionary forces, and to the objective circumstances to which the subjective forces had perforce to bow. This seems to us an extremely social-democratic kind of explanation. Ever since 1914 the social-democrats have been explaining their treason to the proletariat by the strong forces of capitalist society, against which the working class was alleged to be powerless. Also this explanation of the apologists of the retreat is substantially wrong in construction. In July, before it was decided to intensify the political crisis in Germany by joining the Saxon government, the correlation of forces was assumed to warrant a successful issue of the struggle. No one will dispute the fact that there was a change in the correlation of forces between July and October; yet it was not in favour of the counter-revolution, but much rather in favour of the revolution. The junction of the fascist bands with the legal organisations of the reichswehr, for common action against the revolution, was already an accomplished fact in July and was duly taken into account. On the other hand, between July and October, we succeeded in building up substantially our fighting ranks, in strengthening their discipline, in organising them on a broader basis and in arming them more efficiently. As long as we shall be in a state of illegality, we shall probably never have a better military outlook for the proletariat than we had at that time.

The only possible improvement of the correlation of forces in the future may take place in the shape of continued disaffection among the popular elements and troops in the service of the ruling class, of a substantial weakening of the enemy's camp. This can and will be made possible by a continuation of the economic ruin, by gambling in stocks and by further collapse of the financial system of the empire and of the states and communities, by further expropriation of the petty-bourgeois forms of property. But in order that the process of disintegration should turn to the advantage of the revolution, it is necessary to gain the confidence and wide sympathies of all these masses who are to-day following the train of the white dictatorship, and this we can achieve only by continuous fighting on the basis of the class struggle, and of the desire for power on the part of the Communist movement. The wavering middle classes and the indifferent masses within the proletariat, who to-day form part of the following of the white dictatorship, are an undisciplined mass who will always be inclined to join the winning side. So far, by our fightless retreat we have not improved the correlation of forces in our favour, but have rather made it substantially worse. It will take us many weeks again to regain the correlation of forces as it existed in the October days, by winning new conquests and sympathies which we have forfeited by our fightless

retreat. It is becoming increasingly evident day by day that economic and political circumstances are at work substantially in our favour; but it will depend on the astuteness of our strategy and tactics to create the necessary subjective factors for the revolutionary movement, so that the objective march of events may lead directly to the proletarian fight for power.

In the course of the debate on the retreat, an attempt was also made to compare the October movement with the action of March, 1921. It was an unworthy attempt directed to an unworthy end and carried on by unworthy means. In March, 1921, the tide of revolution was receding. The bulk of the proletariat would not hear then of the fight for power, for it was swayed by the illusion and belief that the bourgeois democracy would ensure the existence of the working class in a more pleasant way. In October, 1923, these illusions had for the most part been destroyed, and the proletariat turned deliberately to the revolutionary fight for power. This was best demonstrated by the Hamburg fight which, although ending in defeat, was not followed by depression and despair of any kind. The Hamburg fight has, in fact, aroused the proletarian masses to greater hopes and to stronger confidence of the victory to come. This shows clearly that an armed rising in the course of a rising wave of revolution should be assessed at a different rate than a similar fight at low ebb.

Of decisive moment to the revolution are not the weapons and the possession thereof, but the mood and actions of the masses towards the fight for power. The decisive factor in the civil war is the ripeness of the process of disintegration of the old order of society, and the ripeness of the militant determination of the great majority of the people in favour of the new order of society. These all-important factors, as we have already pointed out, could not be turned to advantage owing to the inadequate mobilisation of the masses.

The correlation of forces, which the apologists of the fightless retreat are now claiming to have been against us, could really be found out in the course of the actual fighting and not before, as they are now attempting to assert.

#### e. *Was a Proletarian Victory Possible in October?*

During the discussion on the October events, the apologists of the fightless retreat asked the question : Would the fight in October have led to the "final victory" or to the

"final defeat?" And upon the answer to this question they want the decision on the fightless retreat to be based.

After all that we have said, we think it would not at all be difficult to answer this question. I have already pointed out that it was wrong to stake on the final struggle at the stage of the class struggle as it existed in October. Neither the political situation nor the unfoldment of the class struggle were sufficiently ripe to warrant the stake on the decisive fight. Nevertheless, the October advance of the white dictatorship should not have been allowed to pass unchallenged. This is the decisive fact. Therefore, the Party should have waged not the final fight, but the broadest struggle for partial aims. The imperial executive action against Saxony and Thuringia should have been met by the proclamation of the general strike throughout the empire, with the aim and slogan: Withdraw the troops from Saxony, no trains with troops shall be passed by the railway workers, repeal the martial law, down with General Seeckt, etc. In those places and districts where the correlation of forces proved favourable in the course of the passive resistance of the general strike, other and sharper weapons would have to be added to the general strike.

This fight would probably have brought neither the "decisive victory" nor a "decisive defeat." Nevertheless the fight in October, carried out with all the methods of the proletarian class struggle, which would vary in the different parts of the country, would at least have greatly hampered the rapid and triumphant onslaught of the white dictatorship, and would at all events have weakened its positions. The consciousness of power and the reckless brutality of the present day white dictatorship of Germany would have been substantially curbed at the start. No one will dispute the possibility that the white dictatorship would have been carried out in spite of our resistance. But this is not the root of the question.

The root of the question is: how shall we obtain and maintain the majority of the proletarian masses and of the impoverished middle classes? How shall be strengthen the revolutionary position, and break up the position of the counter-revolution?

Had we led the proletariat into the fight and had we been thrown back in this fight, the proletariat would have seen that we are as yet too weak, but that the Communist Party is the only party that is in earnest opposition to the capitalist domination.

Just as long as the correlation of forces is against us, as it is asserted by the apologists of the fightless retreat, we must gather the masses under our banner in ever-increasing numbers through our struggles. The problem of winning the majority of the proletariat must be the strongest guiding motive in all our actions and tactical measures. History has taught us that an evasion of the fight has in no way protected us against the most brutal persecution of the white terror and all its unspeakable means of cruel suppression. The raiding of all our institutions, the confiscation of our printing presses, bookshops and Party property, the prohibition of our meetings and accosiation, the thousands of prisoners, all this could not have been any worse if we had been defeated in a fight of resistance.

As far as things could be foreseen, the fight in October, would not have given us the "final victory," but it would certainly have paved the way for it.

H. REMMELE.

*(To be continued in next issue.)*

Translated by M. L. KORTCHMAR.



# The Tactical Differences in the K.P.D. in the light of the Theses

BROUGHT UP AT THE LEIPZIG CONFERENCE

(The following document was drawn up by a number  
of Comrades from the Left, and was adopted by a  
vote of 100 to 100 at the Leipzig Conference, and  
strengthens the K.P.D.—Ed.)

The K.P.D. German Communist Party is passing through a period of crisis in the course of history. But it is not a new one. The C.C. which was formed after the October Revolution at the Berlin Conference had implemented resolutions to the effect that in two months from the Left, the Left had been split up into three or four little groups and as a result of this regrouping, the central group of the Left a new element, the Right, was created, and the Left joined in an alliance with the centre against the dangers of opportunism.

This development constitutes a big step forward as compared with the previous situation. When this central group originally arose as the advance guard of the Right, sticking its fingers in opportunist pockets at every point.

This sort of affairs resulted from three causes. First, the total bankruptcy of the K.P.D. in the autumn of 1923, had given us faith over the membership that there was a sort of confirmed disloyalty and a feeble if not quite dead swing towards the Left. Second, the E.R.A.L. compelled the C.C. to follow the policy of self-determination, and this caused the Centre to take up further concessions with the Right, whose stubborn self-gratifying almost anti-Bolshevik attitude had hitherto supported until the very fiasco of the Saxon experiment. And thirdly, the Centre, once it started looking for a different attitude from the Right, began to conceive greatly although hesitatingly and with regard to the great mistakes that had been committed by the Party. This move, which should have been caused principally by the mood of the membership, is an important and favourable symptom.

This turn was consummated at the January Conference in Moscow, and its political meaning has been outlined, more or less clearly, in the resolution of the Executive on the lessons of the German events.

What was the substance of this turn? He who reads the articles which follow, will see that it affects precisely those points on which the Leipsic conference of the K.P.D. has at last acceded to the demands made by the Left one year ago, now that the price of heavy defeat has been paid. The resolution of the Executive renounces the substantial points of the *opportunist* theses of the Leipsic conference and confirms the views on the united front and on the workers' government which the opposition in the K.P.D. has been advocating for years.

Nay, even more than that. The resolution of the Executive makes a post-time avowal of the historical change in the situation which occurred in the summer of 1923. In this connection, one should at least now read the resolution of the Berlin organisation in June, 1923 (quite similar resolutions were adopted by the district conferences of Hamburg shore district, Frankfort-Hessen and Cologne-Mittelrhein, while a similar resolution was rejected with a very slight majority at the district conference of the Ruhr). This resolution represents an important document in its following points :

(1) *The epoch* of the occupation of the Ruhr is characterised as the period in which the decision will be put off for a long time.

(2) Stress is laid upon the necessity to carry out *concretely even to-morrow the seizure of power*.

(3) Hence the *tactical* conclusion is drawn that a *concrete programme* of the *proletarian dictatorship* must be propagated and popularised.

(4) This has its bearing upon the attitude towards the social-democracy, and in two respects. Firstly, the role of the K.P.D. is pointed out as the only party of the revolutionary class struggle, and secondly, a concrete tactical deduction is made from the Saxon example.

(5) The agitational slogan of the workers' government is described as another name for the proletarian dictatorship by reason of its revolutionary programme.

(6) The question of external political relations is clearly

stated. All this is done with a fair amount of clearness, although the solicitude for the so-called line of the Party necessitated a certain amount of circumscription. The resolutions reads as follows :—

1. The forthcoming liquidation of the Ruhr adventure is bound to aggravate the political and economic catastrophe for the European, and particularly for the German proletariat. It is particularly certain that the *separation of the Ruhr district* will further promote the aims of the French and English as well as of the German policies of the Stinnes-Cuno crowd, and the capitalist offensive will become even more ominous for the German proletariat after the separation of the fighting forces of the proletariat of the Ruhr. The growing insecurity and the cross purposes in the circles of the leading bureaucracy of the trade unions and of social-democracy as well as among the middle classes on the one hand, and growing unrest among the wide masses on the other hand, are the indications of a state of development which compel the K.P.D. more insistently than hitherto to assert itself as the only factor capable of finding a way out of the situation. Hence the K.P.D. must in all its propaganda give up all its past hesitation and all the frequent weaknesses of its attitude, it must once again carry on concrete agitation day by day for the seizure of power by the working class. Particularly in its attitude to the momentary mass struggles, the K.P.D. should not confine itself to emphasising the nature of the defensive struggle and the dangers of provocation, but it should also tell the workers and toiling peasants, as well as the bourgeoisie and the reformist leaders, that Communism is the only force that will lead them out of the present chaos, and that the K.P.D. sees in the German working class the maturing of those forces which will to-day or tomorrow confront the proletariat with the question of the seizure of power. This should not be stated in vague, general, casual, theoretical terms, but in definite, concrete, vigorous terms, which should reach to the smallest nucleus of the Party.

2. The economic document of the liquidation of the Ruhr adventure is the epitaph of industry, which meets with its doom in the second note of the German government which accepts wholly and entirely the industrial proposals. Both these documents denote the beginning of the direct realisation of the Stinnes pro-

gramme, and hence it is the duty of the K.P.D. to start upon the aforesaid tasks by rallying the masses to the fight against the Stinnes plan. In opposition to both these documents the K.P.D. must present its own programme which calls for the first steps towards a Socialist economic order. The K.P.D. develops the widest propaganda in the trade unions and in the factories for the following (old Communist) slogans, which acquire increased and actual importance under the acute present situation :—

(a) **Nationalisation of the whole of the heavy industries**, particularly of the mines and foundries.

(b) **Nationalisation and centralisation of the whole of the banking business.** (This demand should be particularly emphasized day by day, as against the trickery plans for the stabilisation of the German exchange and the agitation of the bourgeoisie and social democracy in support of this deceitful slogan).

(c) **Nationalisation and centralisation of the food industries** and of the distribution of food products.

(d) **Abolition of property in land**, and compulsory cultivation, in order to assure the food supply for the labouring population.

(e) **Monopoly of foreign trade.**

To these points, which should constitute the major planks of a precisely to be worked out economic and political programme of the K.P.D., and consequently of the German proletariat, the preliminary remark must be added that they are dependent upon the following considerations :—

(a) Nationalisation can be carried out only by a workers' government which relies upon the support of the factory councils and of the armed workers.

(b) In order to carry out this nationalisation and to make it a decided step towards Socialism, it is absolutely necessary that the workers' government should work alongside of the most rigorous workers' control from the bottom, exercised by the factory councils, which must be formed in every locality and district and which must exercise the control over production locally in the factories and economic districts. Particularly the trade unions must be mobilised for the struggle.

3. The increased propaganda for an empire-wide workers' government, which relies on the support of the Labour organs and of the armed workers and which puts the control of commodities in the hands of the working class, calls for a revision of the attitude of the Party towards the social-democratic governments of Thuringia and Saxony. By their rejection of the Communist demands and by their collaboration with the bourgeois parties, the nature of the social-democratic government of Thuringia was fully revealed. The Communist Party of Thuringia must insist more than ever upon their demands, even at the risk of dissolution of the Landtag. Ever since its inception, the social-democratic Zeigner government of Saxony was different only in word, but not in reality, from any other other government in so far as its politics were concerned. It was not even in a position to carry out those conditions on which they secured the support of the K.P.D.

The things that happened during demonstrations at Bautzen, Dresden and Liepsic have shown that the social-democrats either exercised no influence upon their police administration or that they have deliberately used it in the same manner as a bourgeois government, for the protection of bourgeois "law and order" and of capitalist property.

The K.P.D. cannot tolerate the duplicity and doubtful attitude of this government. Before it is given any support the Zeigner government should pursue a Labour policy.

Hence the Party must put the question thus:

Either the Zeigner government, with the aid of the K.P.D., should break the sabotage of the Right S.P.D., compel Fleissner, the chief of police to resign, punish the police officers who shot at the workers' demonstration, cleanse the whole machinery of police and officials and undertake to entrust the maintenance of order at future demonstrations to the proletarian hundreds, or the K.P.D. should re-consider the whole question of supporting the Zeigner government and have it discussed at the factories and by the whole of the working population of Saxony as well as by a congress of the factory councils.

This congress of the factory councils must be con-

vened over the heads of the social-democratic and trade union leaders, it must either obtain guarantees that will prevent any repetition of the events which occurred at Dresden, Bautzen and Leipsic, or it should withdraw its support from the Zeigner government as a petty-bourgeois government which is hostile to the interests of the workers.

This action of the Saxon comrades should be backed by intensification of the campaign for an empire-wide workers' government while the question should be practically put, that any social-democratic government in the various states cannot be successful unless accompanied by a similar movement throughout the empire.

4. The political and economic chaos in Germany has raised once again the question of external policies before the large masses of the workers as well as of the petty-bourgeois elements. The sympathy for Soviet Russia, has gone far beyond the circles of the Communist Party. The Party must now engage more than ever before in active propaganda for Soviet Russia. Our campaign for an empire-wide workers' government must be accompanied by the advocacy of an understanding with our neighbour in the East. An understanding with Soviet Russia, a revolutionary alliance, will also ease the payment of reparations to a Labour-governed Germany, even if the Entente capitalists, after the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government in Germany, should be strong enough to extort these payments.

5. In order to solve the general political problems, the Communist Party must join the masses in their fights against high prices and wage-reductions and direct them against the sabotage of the reformist leaders, and the Communist press and propaganda in particular, should do everything possible to encourage and organise such spontaneous fights throughout the country. The Party must clearly expose the latest swindle of the trade union bureaucracy, the sliding scale of wages, at the same time avoiding the trap of the trade union bureaucracy, which consists of theoretical hair-splitting on gold wages, stabilised wages, index wages and so on. At the same time the Party must now devote particular attention also to the movement of the agricultural labourers. Just now, at the time of the catastrophic fall of the mark, the question of propaganda among the rural population should not be neglected for

a single instant. Hence the concrete tasks for the coming weeks are the following :—

Propaganda for the organisation and promotion of wage-campaigns.

Persistent campaigning for the workers' programme as against the guarantee offers of the industrials, and for the control of production, prices and distribution.

Protection for the fights of the workers against Fascist attacks, by the creation of proletarian defence organisations in the factories and trade unions.

Extension of the movement of factory councils and control committees.

Fighting for a revolutionary Labour movement, for the proletarian dictatorship, for the alliance with Soviet Russia.

Mobilisation of the whole membership of the Party particularly intensification of the work of the factories and trade unions. On these grounds the district committee of Berlin-Brandenburg resolves :

Every individual local group, every individual district, every factory nucleus and trade union faction, must immediately elaborate and carry out a concrete programme of action which should fit in concretely with the special circumstances.

While this resolution contains very cautiously the so-called transitional slogans (*e.g.*, "tax on capital," "workers' government," etc.), the resolution adopted by the meeting of the districts of Berlin-Brandenburg, Hamburg, Hessen, Frankfort, Cologne, Pfalz and so on, in August was much clearer upon this point. It demanded the rejection of these slogans and the greatest possible insistence upon the slogan of the proletarian dictatorship; at the same time it contained a fairly minute economic programme. This resolution of the C.C. was rejected with the usual majority (which was made up mechanically at the Leipsic conference), and another resolution was adopted, which was quite vague, and the chairman of the Political Bureau of the Party gave utterance to a remarkable saying : "The time has now come at last to forbid the frivolous talk about the proletarian dictatorship."

The Cuno strike came along, and the Party was so un-

prepared that the general strike that was proclaimed in Berlin was spreading but slowly and partially through the country, which compelled the Berlin strike committee to dissolve after three days. After this strike, even the blind could see that all attempts at "intermediate stages" ("left social-democratic" or trade union government) were the product of either political incapacity or of opportunism. But the C.C. of the Communist Party insisted on these attempts and on supporting the "most probable" and "most advantageous" government for the workers, as we were told. All this time this "advantageous government" took no steps whatever to prevent the military intervention against the coalition government in Saxony.

As to the attitude of the leaders of the K.P.D. towards the Saxon government, even after the bankruptcy of the Saxon comedy, the cat was let out the bag by Comrade Bandler, the chairman of the Political Bureau, in his speech before the C.C. on the 4th of November, 1923, in which he submitted the following theses (quoted from No. 18 of *The International*) :

"On what grounds did we expect immediate decisive fights? Because we thought that such decisive fights would perhaps evolve out of the defence of the remnants of the November republic which have almost ceased to exist."

"The entry of the Communists into the Saxon government was undertaken in order to lead the fight for the defence of the bourgeois republic towards the fight for the rule of the proletariat."

"This situation (to wit, the "November republic"—A.M.) has now changed, because in this respect the revolutionary standpoint agrees with the counter-revolutionary standpoint, that the democratic republic is not the ground on which the class-rule could be established."

The last, and craziest, thesis furnishes the key to the policy of the K.P.D., exposing not only its theory, as laid down in the theses of the Leipsic conference, but also its practice, as "demonstrated" chiefly in Saxony with such fatal effect. It also furnishes an explanation of another "theses" which was adopted by the C.C. on the 4th November, 1923, the opportunist thesis of the "fascist victory over the November republic" which was taken as sufficient ground for a policy of coalition with a "democratic party," as stated by Bandler in the same speech :

" . . . Next to the K.P.D. a democratic party should be found with which the K.P.D. could take common action for the defence of this republic, in order to form a solid front against fascism."

Thus, "fascism" is declared as the enemy of the November republic who should be opposed by coalition with the S.P.D. "for the defence of this November republic." This is the sense of this senseless stuff. Thus, according to Brandler, the "republic" is "still a good thing, however soiled it may be." One can easily imagine the revolutionary tactics evolved by such a brilliant exponent of "theory" and "practice," and this we may see in another thesis of his, in which he sings a hymn for the retreat :

" The strength of revolutionary movement is never (!!) shown in the offensive, but at the very moment when it has to demonstrate its ability to execute an orderly retreat."

He follows up this dictum with a eulogy of NEP, and nothing else could be expected. Of all the Russian tactics, the leader of the German Party has been most impressed by NEP and this again leads us to conclusions on the attitude of the K.P.D. during the fateful years of 1922-23.

The Moscow conference has rejected the crudest of these dangerous errors as well as the **senseless** opportunism of the "attitude" of the Party, as taken by the C.C. in November, 1923. This caused Brandler to drop the "transitional demands." Brandler (who interprets Radek's thoughts rather bluntly, but in German) said :

" While during the period of the November republic we had to avoid such conflicts in which the object of the transitional fights(!) was not worth the sacrifices thereby involved, the very reverse is the case to-day."

This thesis is followed by yet another to the effect that "under fascist domination it would be senseless (!) to present transitional demands to the government (!)" from which the opposite conclusion might be drawn that under the domination of the "November republic," e.g., under Stresemann, it would have been "sensible" to make demands to this government (of which the same Seeckt was a member).

The whole of this opportunistic philosophy has been

utterly discredited. The resolution of the Executive will help the German Party to find again the way to Communism.

The K.P.D. will start on the right way, if the new C.C. which has supported this policy until very recently, will earnestly break with the past, working hand in hand with the Left element of the Party against the opportunist elements and tendencies. Only in this manner a united leadership will be formed, which will be acceptable to both sides, and the programme of work and action will be thoroughly elaborated.

Moscow, 22nd of January, 1924.

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## Preface

The following article was submitted to the editor of the *Communist International* already in March, 1923. At the concluding session of the Moscow conference it was decided to publish it together with a counter-article by Comrade Bandler. The article is not complete: only the first five chapters had been written at the time, and at least two chapters were missing, one on the liquidators and revisionists in the K.P.D., and the other on the consequences. The present concluding chapter was added in November.

I think it was a great mistake that the article was not printed in time. The ostrich policy in regard to German party questions has already led to the catastrophic fiasco of the period of the Saxon government. He who will now read attentively this article which was deliberately written in a less aggressive tone than it should have been written in, will perhaps understand at last why the Saxon policy was such as it was, why our ministers could *only* deliver bad reformist speeches, how tremendous were the illusions they entertained before joining the government, and how unardonably false was their analysis of the situation.

I believe that the theoretical roots of this policy, which is by no means accidental, were substantially pointed out already in the incomplete article. But the article in its present shape goes on to point out the practical effects of the application of this policy of relying upon the "workers in better circumstances," upon their "democratic illusions, which should enable us to win the power for the proletariat

in a parliamentary way." This is the policy which has put the German revolution in gravest danger, and if allowed to go on, it is bound to lead to the extinction of the K.P.D. and of the Comintern. The proof was furnished, for instance, by the Saxon episode. At this time of day it would be a crime to try to obliterate the differences, to keep silent about the mistakes, and to avoid stating openly the things as they were, and as they should not be. We should not be afraid to speak of our mistakes and ailments. May our enemies yell their delight, we speak of our ailments in order to remedy them, and to prepare the knock-out blow to our enemies.

A. M.

Nov. 21st. 1923.

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(Written in March, 1923.)

#### I.—The Workers' Government according to the Theses of the Majority.

"In the democracy without democrats, in the republic without republicans, it is for us to be the democrats and the republicans." (Comrade Bandler at a meeting of officials in Berlin.)

"With a certain amount of vindication the opposition points out, on the strength of numerous statements by the representatives of the "right" that it has frankly become the fashion to put the final goal in the background, in the name of the exigencies of the practical everyday work." (Friesland in "Sozialistischer Bote," No. 4.)

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International adopted no final resolutions upon the central political question of the tactics of the united front in the various countries, nor upon the question of the workers' government. The Leipsic conference of the K.P.D. adopted conclusive theses on the question of the united front and of the workers' government, which were the subject of heated debates. Since these questions are of international importance, and since the differences in the K.P.D. are great, it is necessary to deal exhaustively and thoroughly with these questions. At bottom, it is not merely a question, how the Communist Party should gain influence over the wide masses, or how the proletariat should at this moment create such a government that would carry out proletarian policies. The question

is rather of the view of the entire opposition of the K.P.D. upon the subject which should have been settled by Communists long ago, to wit, the role of the Communist Party. In this connection it should be observed, although the comrades may be unaware of it, that the actual realisation of the tactical methods recommended by the theoreticians of the "right" would lead to the ideological liquidation of the Communist movement. It will be the task of this article to prove this statement in detail.

The slogan of workers' government (which is the essential point of the problem) is just now both proper and useful to the K.P.D. What is the workers' government?

This question is answered by the majority theses as follows :—

"The workers' government is neither the proletarian dictatorship nor a peaceful, parliamentary way towards it. It is an attempt of the working class to carry out labour policies **within the bounds and by means of the bourgeois democracy**, relying upon the support of the proletarian organs and of the proletarian mass-movements\* whereas the proletarian dictatorship deliberately wrecks the democratic institutions and the democratic machinery of the state, in order to substitute them entirely by proletarian class-organs."

This is a definition of the workers' government, and it is necessary to examine closely this definition in all its parts.

This definition starts with the astounding statement about the "attempt of the working class to carry out Labour policies, etc.,," this definition, claiming to be "realistic," is indeed anything but that.

Firstly, the working class as a **class**, under the conditions of the present time in Germany, cannot think of carrying out "Labour policies" unless it is determined as a **class** to fight and to overthrow the enemy class, the bourgeoisie, which means that it should prepare for revolutionary action (revolt) for the conquest of power, and thus *destroy* the so-called democracy.

\* In Saxony the "proletarian organs" (factory councils) and "proletarian mass movements" (general strike, Chemnitz conference) were *deliberately* ignored. On the other hand, "democracy" and the means of "bourgeois democracy" were much paraded in the extremely reformist "constitutional" speeches, although the actual rule was already in the hands of General Muller.

*Secondly*, these "bounds of democracy" are surrounded in the majority resolution with a sort of halo as a **thing in itself** and is so detached from reality that a leading comrade, like Brandler, could declare in full earnest (at a meeting of officials at Berlin), that Ebert could even to-day employ the democratic means of democracy in the interests of the bourgeoisie and consequently the democracy could also (formally) be employed in the interests of the proletariat. The same Comrade Brandler (in "*International*," Vol. 1) writes that we could win the working masses for Communism "by adapting ourselves to the conceptions of the workers in better circumstances, by endeavouring if possible to place at the service of the proletarian class-struggle the power and authority (!) of the state after capturing them (!) by parliamentary means."

Finally, Comrade Brandler stated, with the consent of the Political Bureau, that the factory council movement (in September, 1922) could be guided by the following "*analysis*" (or tactical "*shrewdness*") which he gave:

"The Government (that of Wirth—A.M.) and the ruling social democrats and trade union leaders are *formally pledged* to carry out legislation, either by emergency measures or by accelerated parliamentary means, which would put the working class (!) in the position to control production, prices, finances, trade, etc., by means of their own **class organs** (!). If they start upon this course, we shall support them."

"The Government and the ruling social democrats and trade union leaders have the formal facility to allow the working class quite legally (!) to confiscate real values. . . ."

Then again, in the political resolution of the C.C. (which was modified at the Party conference) we read a sentence to the effect that it is the duty of the K.P.D. to join the workers' government in order to carry on its fruitful activity therein, "**backed by the means of power of the bourgeois state.**" This shows such a state of theoretical confusion that the K.P.D. is becoming permeated with views on "democracy" which were hitherto known only in the  $2\frac{1}{4}$  International, and this vindicates the assertion of the minority that there was danger of a revision of the Communist theory of the State.

*Thirdly*, it still remains a mystery how these "means

of bourgeois democracy" are to be harmonised with the "proletarian organs" if the latter should be the specific fighting class-organ of the social revolution (Soviets) and not merely the "Labour parties and trade unions," as for instance, the "Leipziger Volkszeitung," the organ of the S.P.D., interpreted quite properly the theses of our Party majority, in connection with the question of the Saxon Government. On the other hand, the comrades who sponsored these theses declared us to be asses or "alarm-Communists" if we refused to understand how such things were to be thoroughly "harmonised with the Constitution." Thus the discussion was carried to such regions where we truly began to talk in different languages. For we fail to understand how mass-movements, Soviets and constitutions can be mentioned in the same breath, and how it can be asserted that the workers' government can be "maintained within the bounds of democracy, making use of the democratic means of authority" (*i.e.*, troops, justice, schools, press, church, etc.). We admit frankly that we dissociated ourselves from Brandler's assertions as to the compatibility of the proletarian dictatorship with the Weimar Constitution, which were since incorporated in the "theoretical" theses of the K.P.D. majority, even though the definition in these theses says something about "destroying the bounds of democracy," the devil knows for what reason. We fail to see the logic thereof. If Soviets are possible "within the bounds of democracy," what earthly reason is there to destroy them? It was already stated, and much better, in the first theses of the 2½ International that "the bounds of democracy, although useful in themselves would have to be destroyed, and dictatorial measures adopted, if the bourgeoisie should prove particularly unruly." Otherwise everything would go on smoothly and peacefully, although we are told at the same time that it is not a question of "peaceful parliamentary evolution" towards the Soviet dictatorship. In that case we fail to understand how and wherefore the democratic institutions are to be destroyed, since Brandler is out to win not only "the workers in better circumstances," but also (oh, what success!) "to place at the service of the proletarian class-struggle the power and authority of the state after capturing them by parliamentary means."\*

*Fourthly*, the definition of the Party theses leads not only to a liquidation of the Communist theory of the State,

\* This senseless sentence, however, is the key to the Saxon policy of the K.P.D., and since that Saxon policy was to be a "model" for the entire policy of the Party, it constituted the nail of the policy of the K.P.D.

but also to the ideological liquidation of the Communist Party into the bargain. The expression "the attempt of the working class" is not a mere slip of the tongue, nor merely an unrealistic analysis (which assumes the working class as a compact entity); but the manner in which the theses formulate the militant tasks of the Party indicates the profound ignorance of the authors as to the role of the Communist Party. They write in their theses: "Participation in the workers' government does not mean any compromise of the revolutionary aims of the proletariat on the part of the Communist Party, nor any trick or tactical manoeuvre, but earnest readiness to fight jointly with the reformist Labour parties if they will demonstrate clearly *their intent* (!) to break loose from the bourgeoisie (!) and to join the Communists in the fight for the daily demands of the proletariat."

From this statement we see quite clearly that the question of the workers' government is not put as a question of power, and what is more important, the K.P.D. is considered as a Labour party next to the S.P.D. on terms of equality. This means a retraction of our Communist conception of the role of the Communist Party.\*

*Fifthly*, this observation is further illustrated by examining the conception of the majority theses about the role of the S.P. If the reformist Labour parties "really want to demonstrate clearly their intent" to join the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie (because the struggle for the daily demands in Germany and in Europe to-day, if it is to be conducted in real earnest, implies revolutionary fighting), if the S.P.D. is to be transformed from the "left wing of the bourgeoisie" into the "right wing of the proletariat" i.e., the S.P.D. as a Party, with its organisational apparatus, with its leaders should consciously join the class-struggle as a "right wing," in other words as less "radical" than the K.P.D.), if this is true and possible, then one cannot see any longer what distinction there is between the K.P.D. and the S.P.D.

We have summarised briefly the logical consequences which followed directly from the definition. We only wish to add two remarks, which in our opinion furnish a further illustration of the fundamental fallacy of these theses. The first remark has reference to the following quotation from the theses:—

"The Communist Party advocates the workers'

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\* This was particularly demonstrated in Saxony.

government as the only (!!) government capable at the present moment of supporting the proletariat in its fight for existence, as against the bourgeois, coalitionist and social-democratic governments."

It was not without intent that we quoted the passage from Friesland's article at the head of this article, in face of such strange conceptions. We, the minority, are of the opinion that during the present "period," as indeed during the era of proletarian revolution in general, the Soviet Government is the **only government capable of realising the demands and expectations of the proletariat**, and we particularly miss during the present Ruhr crisis any clear statement of principle on the part of the K.P.D. which should indicate to the workers that the **only** solution for the reparations crisis is the Soviet dictatorship and the Social-revolution.

The second remark refers to the following formulation :

"The workers' government can come into existence in the course of the struggles of the large masses against the bourgeoisie, only as a **concession** on the part of the reformist leaders to the militant aspirations of the working class."

This "concession" we fail to understand. If it has any meaning at all, it should signify that the reformist leaders possess a sort of divine authority over the "working class" and that they can "grant concessions" from the height of their Olympus. At the same time it is not pointed out clearly by the K.P.D. that the reformist leaders, even after joining the workers' government, after "being forced by the workers to carry out Labour policies," after being transformed from the "left wing of the bourgeoisie" into the "right wing of the proletariat," will continue to betray the masses of the workers. The quoted passage betrays an attitude that is entirely impossible to Communists, namely that the S.P.D. is the "big and strong brother," without whose aid the small and weak K.P.D. cannot make a single step. And this pretends to be a "realistic" conception, based on the (famous) "correlation of forces," whereas in reality it is merely a *liquidatory tendency*, so far unconscious, which has affected the wide circles of the officials of the K.P.D., and of which we shall yet speak in greater detail.

## II.—The Workers' Government according to the Theses of the Minority.

The theses of the minority contain no definition of the workers' government. This is not accidental, and to our mind it is not a drawback. We have always insisted that a workers' government in Germany would mean the beginning of the fight for the full power of the proletariat, and for this reason we could not give any static definition of a stable type of government of the workers which was "neither the democracy nor the dictatorship of the proletariat." To us, the workers' government, as a stage of achievement, constitutes only a possibility (not particularly probable), but by no means as a necessity, and for this reason we gave particular attention to a definition of the conditions for the formation of such a workers' government, and of the method of making use of this slogan, and to a demarcation against any possibilities of opportunistic, liquidatory and revisionist digressions (for these theses were written for Communists, after all). The attempt was not made to draw a definition, such as has been so monstrously concocted in the theses of the majority. We have already partly exposed the "realism" of the analysis contained in the majority theses. We have also tried to be realistic, *i.e.*, to base our reasoning on things as they are. We realised that there are large elements of the German working class which are not yet ready to-day to take up the fight for the proletarian dictatorship, and that large numbers of these believe that a workers' government could help them, without being the proletarian dictatorship. This is what the comrades of the majority are pleased to designate as "democratic illusions." We are of the opinion that they are making a wrong analysis of the subjective conceptions of large elements of the proletariat. Democratic illusions, *i.e.*, belief in the ability of "democracy as such" to help the workers, are not entertained by the workers in the S.P.D. "Democratic illusions" are entertained chiefly by those officials of the S.P.D. whom Brandler describes in his article as "workers in better circumstances." It would be a futile task to try and conform to the illusions of the latter. On the other hand, the large masses of the workers are passive, and it is therefore, necessary and possible, in our agitation and propaganda as well as in everyday work, to explain to them that there can be no relief from their misery as long as there exists a coalition government or a bourgeois government, that the workers would be served much better by having a government "of their own," a workers' government. Let us not be deceived. The advantage of this colourless slogan

is that it can say to the workers who are not yet willing to fight for the proletarian dictatorship : " But you must agree that things will be pretty rotten as long as there exists a Cuno Government or a coalition government." The disadvantage of this colourless slogan is, firstly, that it is not aggressive enough even to the passive masses,\* and secondly it is likely to cause confusion even among our own comrades, if the Communist Party would fail to explain to its own members that this slogan does not represent a " sacred cause," but rather a tactical lever which we have to use with great care and prudence. We must constantly point out that the workers' government is only the prelude to the real fight for the proletarian dictatorship, and that " really " this " workers' government " is nothing else but another name for the proletarian dictatorship, used in order to gain the hearing of those who are still in possession of " democratic illusions." This, again is likely to sow confusion among the more radical elements in our Party who follow reluctantly the tactical line of the Party, and are inclined to K.A.P. (Communist Labour Party) sentiments, of which no idea can be formed unless by mingling directly with the masses of the membership (even of those districts whose delegates at the Party Conference identified themselves with the standpoint of the majority). Therefore, we stated in our theses quite clearly :

" The K.P.D. must always emphasise in its propaganda and agitation that the Soviet dictatorship alone will be able to satisfy the requirements of the whole proletariat as a class."

This we did not say in order to provide a fig-leaf for our Communist chastity, but rather because we have found out by practical experience that the indifferent masses can be acted upon solely by sharp and clear Communist propaganda. In the hands of capable propagandists it can effectively counteract the pseudo-activist agitation of the nationalists and fascisti, whereas milk-and-water " democratic " propaganda, adapted to the illusions of the " workers in better circumstances," would at best earn the praises of the S.P.D. officials, as was richly demonstrated after the Leipsic conference, when the S.D.P. papers were profuse in their compliments to the right wing of our party. This again was most clearly formulated by Friesland, as follows :

" The question being thus put, the Communists

\* This was particularly demonstrated in August-September, 1923, when the pressure of the mass movement compelled to develop the propaganda for proletarian dictatorship and nationalisation.

cannot deny their having adopted such a half-measure as the workers' government, just in view of its being a half-measure, merely because they became convinced of the impossibility to bring about the proletarian dictatorship by anti-bourgeois agitation alone. Therefore, the theoreticians of the C.P., once they started on the slippery path of opportunism and having to reckon with the facts, will eventually be in a predicament to explain the difference of principle between the respective tactics of social-democrats and Communists. The difference is now rather one of degree than of principle."

The theses of the minority describe the conditions for the formation of the workers' government as follows :

"For the fight on behalf of the workers' government it is necessary :

(a) That the proletariat should have a united defensive front.

(b) That it should be ready to start the fight for power, *i.e.*, to pass from the defensive to the offensive.

(c) That it should create its own organs during the preparatory struggles, which should weld and organise the fighting masses and on which the workers' government could rely after its formation, as upon live and militant class organs (Soviets, control committees).

(d) That the determined part of the proletariat should not merely discuss the question of arming, but should proceed to its practical solution, so that the workers' government, when formed, should be able to assist the systematic arming of the working class with the means of the state."

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the theses go on to emphasise :—

"Thus the workers' government can come only as a result of large mass movements and in the presence of proletarian militant organs, when the aggressive course of the proletariat has reached such a stage that it consciously takes up the fight for power. The maintenance of the workers' government, when established, will depend on the protection and backing of the masses outside of parliament, of the proletarian organs which will help it carry out its measures."

Furthermore, the theses make it quite clear that the propaganda for such a workers' government should leave no

doubt that such a government should be established only in the cause of the fight for power :

" If not backed by mass movements, proletarian militant organs and armed workers, the workers' government will be defeated by the bourgeoisie. It will be left in the lurch by the masses themselves if it will not take aggressive dictatorial action against the " rights " of the bourgeoisie in order to carry out the demands of the proletariat. By attacking the democratic institutions of the bourgeoisie, and by carrying out these necessary dictatorial measures, it will incur the determined, and even the armed, opposition of the bourgeoisie. Under such circumstances the mass movement, which led to the workers' government, must either proceed to establish a proletarian Soviet dictatorship which should completely break the power of the bourgeoisie, thus completing the work begun by the creation of the proletarian organs (by the growth and increased strength of the Soviets), which should be deliberately carried on by the workers' government or the united forces of the bourgeoisie will overthrow the workers' government and the movement which brought it into being."

We shall see presently what a *compromise formulation* is being urged by the majority (in opposition to our formulation), in which excessive stress is laid by them upon the necessity of civil war and upon the militant aspect in general.

On the role of the S.P.D. the minority theses have the following to say :—

" The Communists must also declare their readiness to join in the formation of a workers' government. At the same time they must *openly* express their profound mistrust of the reformist leaders, which is founded upon historical experience. The K.P.D. knows that the S.P.D. as a whole is neither willing nor able to fight. The K.P.D. knows that the social-democratic leaders will only be forced to fight against their will. The K.P.D. knows that the social-democratic leaders will join a workers' government (together with the Communists) only upon the greatest pressure from the working masses. Of this the great masses of the workers are yet unaware. Therefore, it is the task of the K.P.D. to bring this pressure to bear upon the leaders by organising the movement of the masses. They will join the workers' government as either the conscious or unconscious agents of the bourgeoisie, for their policy has always resulted in the cruel defeat of the working class

at the hands of the bourgeoisie (Hungary, Bavaria). The Communists join the workers' government in order to beat back the capitalist offensive, to unfold the fight for the full power of the proletariat and to separate the masses from the reformist leaders.

"The K.P.D. knows that the social-democratic leaders even after joining the workers' government, will practice sabotage, compromises with the bourgeoisie and downright treachery. In this they will be deliberately supported by the bourgeoisie. The Communists should frustrate these designs. Hence it is the sense and task of the fight for the workers' government to separate the masses from the reformist leaders and to bring them under the leadership of the K.P.D. in the course of the fight and of the practical experiences."

We should observe that even this formulation represents a *compromise*, because the theses were intended as a platform for the Party conference. Nevertheless they state quite clearly what is passed over in silence by the majority theses, or on which the majority theses take the opposite view,\* even if in some passages they seem to be rather similar in construction. Finally, it should also be pointed out that these theses of the minority state clearly the question of responsibility of the workers' government :

"Hence the question of responsibility of the workers' government to the Soviets is by no means a question of formality. It will be the task of the K.P.D. as the party of the proletariat, to see to it that the conquest of power should be made the direct possession of the fighting masses through their representatives. The question of the responsibility to the Soviets will carry the workers' government from the narrow hall of parliament into the wide field of the revolutionary mass-movement. Responsibility to the Soviets will also upset the whole edifice of the formalities of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. For this reason the K.P.D. should lay the utmost stress upon this question in its propaganda and agitation.†

Thus we see quite clearly the difference of conception

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\* In Saxony the leaders of the party majority believed actually that the Zeigner crowd would fight. The result was that only after the failure of the whole policy (of our social-democratic illusions) the "sudden discovery" had to be made that "even" (this "even" is quite classical) the "left" S.P.D. leaders were "traitors."

† By our failure to get the Saxon government to rely upon the support of the Soviets, we caused it to break its own neck and our own.

between the majority and the minority. Let us now see how the polemics were carried on on both sides.

### III.—State-wide Workers' Government.

In Germany there are still a number of little states which possess their own parliaments. In some of these states the workers have a parliamentary majority, and in others they are in great minority. This gave rise to the propaganda for the formation of a workers' government in *individual states*. The instance of Saxony was quoted, where the Communist Party during eighteen months was supporting a social-democratic government, in which the social-democrats and independents were in a minority in parliament. The Communists supported that government, which carried out a number of reactionary laws (police supervision, taxes on land and industry), and which in reality meant an anonymous coalition with a "Socialist" government which was carrying on bourgeoisie politics, without differing in anything but in name from the usual form of coalition government. It took our parliamentary faction in Saxony a long time to decide to vote against that famous government. When that government was overthrown and Labour had won a majority in the Saxon Landtag, our Party once again supported a social-democratic minority government, without stipulating any conditions whatever for such support. For the forthcoming electoral campaign the slogan of the "workers' government in Saxony" was devised.

Was this slogan a proper one? Yes, it was, in so far as it was a question of a propagandist slogan, of a slogan which emphasised the fact that the overthrown social-democratic government had not been a "workers' government," but an ordinary bourgeois government, whose policies were all the more villainous because they were carried out ostensibly by representatives of the workers. On the other hand, those comrades were wrong who thought that a real "workers' government" worthy of the name could be established in Saxony as the simple result of a Labour majority in the parliamentary elections.

Did anyone have the intention to join the Saxon government without further ado? Of course, some comrades did, although they are now anxious to deny any such intention. It will, therefore, be quite useful to recall the facts.

After the declaration of the results of the Landtag elections in Saxony, the Saxon organisation of our Party brought

out a "programme" of 10 points, which was to constitute the basis of negotiations for the formation of a workers' government. This programme was not formulated with any degree of satisfaction, and the open letter in which it was announced was started with the remarkable introduction: "We refrain from raising purely Communist demands." The demands of this programme were neither thoroughly thought out nor presented in such fashion that it could be seen at a glance which of the demands were essential and which were secondary. It particularly failed to point out distinctly that no workers' government is worthy of the name unless it is responsible to the Soviets, on which it relies as upon the real forces of the armed defence of the workers. These two essential conditions were buried in points 7 and 9 of the programme among such demands as that of universal military service for all men between the ages of 15 and 58 (in which demand just a "trifle" was overlooked: it was not stated how and with what compulsory means this was to be carried out "within the bounds of democracy") and the demand for extensive deliveries of coal. When the negotiations were started, the question was asked in the C.C. of our Party whether the negotiations should be allowed to break up on any one of the points of the programme, e.g., on points 7 and 9 on which everybody was agreed that they were essential, even if buried among coal and milk deliveries and universal military service. A vote was taken in the C.C. which resulted in 3 for and 3 against, which showed that there were comrades upon the C.C. who voted for the unconditional joining of a coalition government with the S.D.P.\*

One cannot help wondering what the comrades really expected from a step of this kind. They expected an "intensification of the movement" as a result of the Communists joining a comic outfit which was to be labelled as a "workers' government." They never asked themselves what movement was to be intensified; because as a matter of fact, neither in Saxony nor in the rest of the empire was there any sign of a movement for the creation of a workers' government.† The comrades further forgot that the propaganda for a state-wide workers' government would

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\* In October, 1923, the K.P.D. joined the Saxon government *unconditionally*; for the "condition" of "establishing a united front against the reaction" is merely a miserable phrase.

† This fatal mistake of trying to promote or intensify a movement by joining the government, without saying, and above all without giving anything to the wide masses of the workers by such joining, was committed in October, 1923.

simply be killed by such a step\* because the factory council congress had just declared that a workers' government should rely on the Soviets and on the armed workers, and it was at a moment like this that the comrades at the head of the Communist Party were ready not only to form a coalition government with the S.D.P. "within the bounds of democracy," but also to forego even the pretext of a guarantee that the government thus formed would not become an ordinary coalition. We frankly admit that we failed to understand the reasons which prompted those comrades to adopt this "standpoint." Perhaps they thought that our past propaganda for the workers' government made it incumbent upon us at this stage to show the **sincerity of our intentions**. Well, one would think that "morality" belongs to the realm of theology, not of politics. Secondly, the situation had nothing to do with the question of our "sincerity"; because we had advocated a **workers' government**, not a coalition government which no one could really distinguish from the erstwhile social-democratic government save by the fact that a few Communists took their seats by the side of the social-democrats. Perhaps it was the idea of those comrades in joining the government to provoke its fall within the first week, so as to be able to come before the workers and point out to the social-democratic workers that their leaders are nothing but traitors.

But in that case, what use was there in joining for the purpose of quick withdrawal, without attaining anything else save the fact that the Communist ministers were outvoted in the secrecy of the council chamber?† Nothing is demonstrated by such "tactics," no one is exposed, only the Communist Party gets discredited by such antics, as well as the slogan of the workers' government, and what is still worse, our own adherents become disgusted and mistrustful towards us, throwing us into one heap with the S.D.P. leaders, who were all the time telling them the same thing: "We must prove our sincerity, but we are ready at any time to withdraw from the coalition, to show to the workers that we are the only ones who are sincere."

As we have already pointed out, errors of this kind are due largely to a revision of the Communist theory of the State, namely, that by changing the people at the head of

\* The fact is that the slogan of the workers' government was killed by Saxony and by nought else.

+ Our Ministers in Saxony have shown themselves unable to withdraw "decently" and to save their faces. It was only *post factum*, after they were chased out, that they began to lament about the "betrayal" of their "left" S.D.P. colleagues, having kept the peace while they were in the government.

the State apparatus its *class nature* would be changed, or its social structure influenced. Such is the theoretical aspect of the case. In practice, however, this conception is based on a completely perverse analysis of the situation, namely, on the assumption that the proletarian masses would be brought into "movement" without preliminary propaganda for the question of government as a question of power.

On the question of state wide workers' government, the minority theses contain only one brief passage which reads :

"State-wide workers' governments can arise only under acute political situations, in which the pressure of the masses is so strong that some of the social-democratic leaders are compelled to take their stand upon the proletarian class policy, in order to restrain the proletariat from radical action."

"A state workers' government is a government in which the Communists take part and which relies on the proletarian class-organs, not on bourgeoisie parliament.

"A State workers' government can be maintained only if backed by a mass movement throughout the empire, or if leading to such a movement. The aim of such a mass movement is to win the establishment of an empire-wide workers' government. It may also occur as an outcome of the defence against the attack of the reaction upon a State-wide workers' government.

"Only in the course of intense mass-struggles, during an acute crisis throughout the empire, workers' governments in the various states may accelerate the proletarian united front and increase the class-consciousness of the proletariat and the aspirations of the working class for political power.

"The fight for the empire-wide workers' government and for the proletarian dictatorship will do away with the reactionary notions of petty-state-patriotism."

The substantial purport of these brief sentences is as follows : Firstly, when the social-democratic leaders of a state decide to form a workers' government, it is only in order to stultify the proletarian class struggle, not in order "to carry on labour politics," as stated in the majority theses (emphasising the role of social-democracy as a party). Secondly, even in a particular state the workers' government is not a parliamentary government (breaking the bounds of democracy). Thirdly, a state workers' government which does

not rely on a mass movement throughout the empire, aiming at the conquest of power throughout the empire, is nothing but a scheme (the state is the instrument of a class and its class nature will not be changed by changing the heads). Fourthly, state-patriotism is a reactionary survival which should be done away with. This conception leads to the unmistakable conclusion that the achievement of a state workers' government will be a fairly rare thing, and will not be realised unless accompanied by the fight for power throughout the empire.

How is this question treated in the majority theses? On this question they are just as contradictory and vague as upon the question of the workers' government in general. Thus, for instance, we read :—

“The social composition of the population in the various states has enabled the working class to secure a majority in the state parliaments. This fact leads to the formation of social-democratic state governments with the support of the K.P.D. The social-democratic state governments confine themselves to petty-bourgeois reform policies. The fear of mobilisation of the working class against reaction renders these governments into the docile tools of the capitalist offensive.”

Every sane person must ask himself wherefore the Communists should support these “docile tools of the capitalist offensive?” To this the theses reply as follows :—

“The K.P.D., by its practical daily polities in the interests of the proletariat, must demonstrate to the working class the objective reactionary nature of the social-democratic government. In its propaganda among the masses, the K.P.D. should urge the formation of state workers' governments.”

The answer is preposterous. We support the “objective reactionary social-democratic governments” and at the same time convince the masses of the “objective reactionary nature” of these governments (by our supporting them!). While carrying on propaganda for the “formation” of a state workers' government we fail to turn this question into a *question of power*. In order that we may not be accused of exaggerating, we quote profusely the majority theses and demonstrate historically, so to speak, that we do not exaggerate. We have already quoted a passage from the majority theses which says :—

"State workers' governments may arise only under acute political situations, when the pressure of the masses is so strong that some of the social-democratic leaders are forced to take their stand upon the proletarian class policy."

This sentence was included in the minority theses, but only in order to state the very opposite of the thing that might be deduced from the majority theses, namely that the social-democratic leaders *cannot* "take a stand upon a proletarian class policy," and that they would never seriously think of doing so. The majority theses on this point contained the same fallacies about the social-democrats *as a party*, which we have pointed out in connection with the general question.

But what shall be the work of a workers' government?

"The K.P.D. takes part in state workers' governments in order to transform them into bases for the fight for the workers' government throughout the empire. The fight against reactionary imperial policy, the arming of the workers, the transfer of all the means of authority (police, administration, justice, schools) to the proletariat, universal insurance and ample feeding and clothing for the unemployed at the cost of the possessing class, these are the most important and direct tasks of a state workers' government."\*

And all this is said without even putting the *question of power!* Just imagine that "all the means of authority" would be handed over to the proletariat "within the bounds of democracy." Perhaps, we exaggerate again? Oh, no, just read the theses:—

"A state workers' government must exercise in the interest of the proletariat as a class all the legislation and authority obtained from the empire, and prosecute a proletarian class policy with all force and vigour, and this may lead to conflicts between the state workers' government and the capitalist government of the empire."

This word "may" is quite classical. It is assumed that the capitalist imperial government "may" look on benignantly at this "transfer of all the means of authority to the proletariat" and that perchance it "may" lead to a conflict! Such a conception of things we consider as be-

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\* The Saxon "Workers' government" did not even dare to mention any of these tasks.

of since of left deviation, with which we shall deal presently wildered, to put it mildly. But if we analyse theoretically the underlying basis of this conception, we find it excellently stated in our party organ of Hanover ("Niederachsische Arbeiterzeitung" of the 15th of March), in the following words :—

" Democracy and dictatorship are simply one and the same thing ! At present the dictatorship is practised by the bourgeoisie, within the democracy ; later on, when we shall gain the preponderance, we shall exercise the dictatorship within the democracy (namely, through the Soviets.)"

At all events, such was the foolish statement made by Abramovitch the Menshevik, at a meeting in Hanover, and our provincial paper is just making fun of this kind of "Marxism." If the paper had analysed closely the majority theses that were adopted at the Leipsic conference, it would have found in them the Abramovitch wisdom, if stated with less clearness. At any rate, Comrade Brandler stated the very same thing at a meeting of officials at Berlin : " Just as Ebert is practising the dictatorship on behalf of the bourgeoisie, within the bounds of democracy, so it is "theoretically" (at least after the theory of the Mensheviks.—A.M.) feasible that the dictatorship might be practised also in the interest of the proletariat within the bounds of democracy." The same idea was expressed by Comrade Brandler upon another occasion, when it was a question of formulating the basic principles of Communism :

"I say the dictatorship of the proletariat is possible even under the German Constitution! What is the meaning of the proletarian dictatorship? The proletarian dictatorship, in the sense of the Communist International, means that the power of the working class should become the leading factor in society and in the state. It may be that a workers' government will, perhaps, come about in Germany in a fortnight, and yet without any high treason!"

This theoretical attitude determines actually the practical policy of the K.P.D.

#### IV.—The Choice Morsel.

A particularly juicy piece of the theses adopted at the Leipsic conference is that part which deals with right and left deviations. It is, so to speak, the choice morsel of the

stew which we are to relish particularly because a thing of that kind is fairly unusual in tactical theses. The right deviations are treated with extraordinary gentleness. We read :—

“ The opportunist tendencies manifest themselves :

(1) In fear of clear and sharp political actions on a united front. In the course of the Rathenau campaign the Party did not everywhere reveal its political face to a sufficient degree (*e.g.*, in the central organ *Rote Fahne*). The Berlin organisation made a sort of “ dumb demonstration ” with the reformists; the Leipsic organisation did not mention its own name in signing a joint manifesto with the social-democrats, so that the document was signed by “ the three Socialist parties.”

(2) In lack of sufficient activity and perseverance on the part of the officials, and in fear of political discussion within the party.\*

(3) In restriction of propaganda to defensive actions (since the March action) in fear of sly manœuvring on the part of the V.S.P.D.

(4) In official utterances and speeches by Communists deputies in municipal and communal councils that were not sufficiently outspoken in the Communist sense, and also in having joint lists of candidates with the S.P.D. at municipal elections.

(5) In fear on the part of some trade unions to wage a relentless fight against the reformist bureaucracy, particularly in the factory council movement.

(6) In fear on the part of individual Communist co-operative societies to take an active stand against the high prices, because in their opinion the fight against high prices would infringe upon the principle of the price of reproduction, even in regard to the co-operative organisations.”

This list looks rather meagre as compared with the list of sins of left deviation, with which we shall deal presently and in the meantime let us supplement a little the list of right deviations. To begin with, the first point speaks of failure of the Party to reveal “ its own face ” with sufficient clearness, and in parentheses it is said : “ *e.g.*, in the central organ *Rote Fahne*,” which should evoke laughter even

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\* Mind you, this is written by comrades who debar any political discussion within the Party as “ detrimental to action ” and who suppress such discussion by disciplinary means.

on the part of the uninformed reader. Now then, is not the central organ the organ of the Central Committee? Is not the chief editor of the central organ a member of the Central Committee, and such a noted Marxist as Comrade Thalheimer? And what is it that produces the face of the central organ? Perhaps it is the reports from Timbuctoo? Is not this face rather produced by the official manifesto and articles of the leaders of the Party?

At the Party conference the attitude of the C.C. in the Rathenau crisis was severely attacked. It was declared that the Party had not taken a stand in the situation by an **official manifesto**, that it had not drawn up an official manifesto which should have immediately raised the question of power and the solutions thereof, namely, the workers' government and the arming of the working class. The C.C. had carried on secret diplomacy with the social-democratic and trade union leaders, it even believed in the class-militant virtues of the trade union leaders; it laid so much stress on the "Republic" that the indifferent masses could believe that the late Herr Rathenau and the dying republic of Herr Stinnes were the deities of the K.P.D.\* It signed the Berlin agreement without a word of official criticism of its demands, it did not even mention officially the measures for the realisation of its own weak and casually mentioned slogans and of the inadequate demands of the Berlin agreement. It went so far as to taboo the mentioning of the **general strike** at official meetings as a measure to force the retirement of the Wirth government. It avoided the use of any hard words against the social-democracy, refraining particularly from mentioning the fact that the social-democrats *could not* be sincere in their "fight." All this was apparently forgotten for the sole reason, mind you, that "the central organ failed to reveal the political face of the Party with sufficient clearness." Together with the central organ are accused also the Berlin organisation and the Leipsic organisation.

With regard to the Berlin organisation the accusation is illogical. At the Fourth World Congress the same organisation was reproached with urging the C.C. to break up the negotiations with the reformists. But it is not a question of logic, but let us say, of historical truth. For the Berlin organisation did not urge a breaking up of negotiations, but a clear Communist face, a presentation of

\* The same mistake, which has its origin in reformism, was committed in November, 1923, when the K.P.D. scandalised itself by the great outcry about the supposed "subjugation" of the "November-republic" (as a thing in itself) by General Seeckt.

ultimative demands to the reformist leaders, publicity of the negotiations, and at all events, a rupture of negotiations after the rejection of the ultimative demands which related to the measures whereby the demands were to be realised. With regard to the dumb demonstration, it is true that the negotiator of the Berlin organisation did break up the negotiations with the S.P.D. and independents, but he was induced by the C.C. to put his signature under the dumb demonstration manifesto, and it was but the logical consequence, because the rupture had already been effected by the C.C. although for other reasons than those which led to the dumb demonstration. That demonstration was organised in the bourgeois quarters of Berlin (at *our* suggestion), and as a matter of fact, the prohibition of free speech affected all parties (and in this connection it may be calmly admitted that the Berlin organisation committed a mistake in sticking to the agreement).

But if the theses are so bent on mentioning individual organisations, then why should they forget to mention that our *Stuttgart* organisation signed a manifesto whose central slogan was: "**For Democracy and Freedom!**" It was under this slogan, which was rather repulsive to German Communists in the year 1922, that our Stuttgart comrades have held their demonstrations, and their spokesmen have yet failed to acknowledge the error. They defend the step in declaring that together with this manifesto they wrote an article in their paper in which the slogan of "democracy and freedom" was "torn into shreds," and that by signing the manifesto they were able "to speak to 30,000 workers." Their "tearing into shreds" consisted of their declaration that "democracy and freedom" was a "phrase which says nothing" (rather sharp Communist criticism, is it not?), which was perhaps read by the subscribers of the Communist paper, who consist of Communists and sympathisers to whom which such criticism of democracy and freedom represented something new, of course (whereas the **manifesto** for democracy and freedom was read by *all* the workers of Stuttgart, **without the tame article** of the Communist paper, and the social-democratic workers said to themselves: now we see that the Communists are also in favour of democracy and freedom!). With regard to the "30,000 workers," it is quite ridiculous to come forward with such arguments. The demonstration was an orderly demonstration for democracy and freedom, in which 30,000 workers took part, which was addressed by a number of speakers from all parties, and perhaps by two or three Communist speakers who had a quarter of an hour to explain to some two or three thousand

workers that they were not for democracy and freedom although they had just marched through the streets for this "phrase which says nothing." This is the kind of tactics which we also describe as deviation, but towards the left. Many other instances of this kind could be mentioned. Thus, for instance, the writer of the theses forgot to mention that an organisation in Thuringia signed a joint manifesto with such organisations that would under no circumstances be courted as partners to a proletarian united front, namely, the Democrats and the "Republican leaders' alliance," and without a word of criticism about these famous organisations, whom our party paper at Gotha a few days later was astonished to find at work against the united front. A wonderful discovery to Communists! Do you want any more instances? We are of the opinion that the theses should have found room to mention the comic attitude of another provincial paper which was afraid to speak of the general strike on account of the attitude of the C.C. and of its central paper, and therefore used the expression of "mass withdrawal of labour power." Evidently there was no room, because it had to be saved for the chastising of "left deviations." Before we come to these, which we do gladly, we shall have one more quotation from the "profound" work of the theoretician of the K.P.D., Comrade Thalheimer (of whom one cannot be certain whether he "elaborates theoretically" right or left deviations). The passage quoted was also worthy of a place in the theses. It was written during a grave crisis in the Party, namely, during the conflict with the K.A.G. (the Levi group), and was calculated to overwhelm these poor dissenters and liquidators. This was done in the following manner:

"We only wish to point out that if Paul Levi were right in his assertion that capitalism in Germany is growing stronger, *i.e.*, that the strength of capitalism would suffice to overcome the crisis of world-war, then the objective background for Communism would vanish. In that case, Communism would indeed be a pious wish and mere revolutionary romantics."

We quote this passage not at random, but because we know that the present discussions in the K.P.D. are the direct continuation of the discussion which we had with the Levi group. It stands to reason that if the representatives of that group had been really "overcome" theoretically as it is asserted in the profound statement of Comrade Thalheimer, which argues that Communism would be superfluous if "the strength of capitalism would suffice to

overcome the crisis of the world-war," then the majority theses would not have to deal so much with right and left deviations as they do. The fact is that the political differences within the Party have not yet been finally eliminated. The membership of the Party is still being entertained systematically to sentimental talk about the discussions that are detrimental to action, and thus the disease of the Levi crisis is still at work in the Party.

We now come to that part of the majority thesis which deals with "left deviations."

#### V.—The Sins of the Left.

A prominent place is given in the majority theses to a recapitulation of the "left" sins, which must be closely examined. The introduction to this recapitulation is short but insinuating. The following statement is made:

"Opportunism makes its appearance to-day in 'left' garb, too. The left have not yet learned properly to approach those who differ from them, those comrades of our class who are still subject to democratic illusions, and to render their daily struggles into the starting point for actions which correspond to the present correlation of forces."

The comrades who penned these terse sentences have failed to behold the forest through the trees.

The delegates to the trade union congress of Leipsic last year were elected in the factories. The strongest trade union of Berlin, the metal workers, sent sixteen delegates to Leipsic. All the sixteen elected delegates were Communists. Obviously they were elected because the Berlin organisation has not learned to approach the class comrades who differ from them in their opinions. But perhaps it was a mere accident? Well, a few days previously, delegates were elected to the woodworkers' conference of Berlin. Out of the fourteen delegates, thirteen were Communists, and it should also be observed in this connection that only those politically organised were admitted to the general meeting of woodworkers where the elections were held. Perhaps a miracle happened to the woodworkers? Then we might ask how did it happen that the Communists scored such great successes at the factory council elections of Berlin last year as well as this year, that the organisation can barely manage to perform all the work thrust upon it by the confidence

given to it by the workers in the factories. Obviously this is due to the fact that the "left" organisation of Berlin has not learned to approach those comrades who think differently from them, whereas the very moderate results of the factory council elections at Chemnitz last year were due to the fact that the local organisation of the K.P.D. understands this business of "approaching" better than the left. And how is one to explain the fact that the factory council movement of Berlin has brought about a factory council congress at the same town of Berlin, with its left organisation, which secured half a million votes in the election? Obviously because "opportunism has made its appearance in left garb" and because the Berlin comrades have not learned "to render the daily struggles of class comrades who differ into the starting point for actions."\*

Thus, the grand romantic attack on "opportunism in left garb" has practically fizzled out. Let us now deal with some of the details. It is said in the theses :

"The left elements, in the working out of the political line of the Party, have acted as a restraining and confusing factor upon many cardinal questions."

A strong reproach, but somewhat one-sided. The comrades who penned these wonderful theses have evidently forgotten that in "working out the political line of the Party" the fight has to be waged persistently against the most dangerous right elements (without the marks of quotation). After the Party was constituted, its political line was "worked out" by Paul Levi, while the authors of the present theses unfortunately failed to see that this line was leading into Menshevism, and the left were therefore forced to intervene as a "restraining and confusing factor." This was done at a time when this kind of attitude met with general disapproval of the rest of the Party. For instance, it happened when Herr Levi wanted to use his honey-tongued art of persuasion to induce the bourgeois government of Fegrenbach-Simons to form an alliance with Soviet Russia, when the same Herr Levi upbraided the Executive because of its lenient attitude upon the question of the K.A.P. and of the Italian movement. The same think happened after the Third World Congress, when Herr Friesland and his bosom friends were "working out" the line of the Party. The truth of this assertion can be demonstrated, for instance, by the first

\* The ability of the K.P.D. organisation in Saxony (which is not "left") to "approach the masses" was shown by the experiment of the Saxon Government, by the Chemnitz conference and by the ill-fated general strike.

specific charge made by the majority theses against the opposition :

" As against the confiscation of real and gold values by the state, they raised the semi-meaningless semi-syndicalist slogan of confiscation of real and gold values from the bottom."

The authors of the theses have a short memory. They have entirely forgotten that the slogan of the confiscation of real values was advanced by Friesland and Meyer as a demand upon the bourgeois state, upon the Wirth Government, not in "syndicalist," but in good **reformist** fashion.\* When a very prominent theoretician of the Party, Comrade Thalheimer, was asked how an "action" was to be started in support of this slogan, he gave the classic reply : "The workers may send delegations from the factories to wait on the government and to demand that the factories should be syndicated by the State." If we at that time raised the slogan of confiscation "from the bottom," we had no "semi-syndicalist" idea behind it, but our aim was to arouse a movement of the masses and to give this movement a political purpose. Another rallying slogan, which also was forgotten by the authors of the theses, the slogan of the workers' government, was proposed by the leading comrades of the Berlin organisation and opposed by those who "worked out the line of the Party," by Friesland, Meyer and others, with all the vehemence at their command (because they knew quite well that these **political amendments** meant **fighting**, while they preferred the meaningless, reformist slogans and "actions" of the leaders).

The other accusations are just as groundless as the one that we have analysed above.

" In the question of the united front they were opposed to the Berlin agreement in which they saw the cause of the alleged weak attitude of the Party, which was a serious hindrance to the carrying out of the tactics of the united front."

The Berlin agreement was the agreement signed by the C.C. of the K.P.D. with the trade unions and social-democrats

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\* This "attitude" persists in the party leadership to this day. This is shown by the explanations of the C.C. to the theses (dated Nov. 4th), in which it is stated that it would be "ridiculous" (!) to present the **demand** (!) of the workers' government and of confiscation of values to "the government of generals." Evidently it would not have been "ridiculous" to present this "demand" to the "Nov. Republic" (supposedly "vanquished" by Seeckt).

during the Rathenau crisis and in which they inserted no measures for the realisation of all the beautiful demands of this agreement (e.g., the State Criminal police) nor any guarantees that the measures that were demanded would not be turned against the workers. The left wing of the Party was at any rate of the opinion that the attitude of the C.C. during the Rathenau crisis was not only "unsettled" but by no means calculated to create a real united front of fighting. It is superfluous now to dwell on the details. This was abundantly done at the Fourth World Congress, where these theses were criticised out of court. At the same time it should be observed that the criticising "left" contained at that time, many of the comrades who were the chief authors of the majority theses at Leipsic, and that a strong opponent and spokesman of the left at the C.C. meeting after the Rathenau crisis was Comrade Kleine, who displayed then the same vehemence which he now does against the left. He is responsible for the most "essential" theoretical part of the majority theses.

"On the question of the workers' government they were in favour at first, but later on they asserted that the workers' government meant the proletarian dictatorship, which was possible only after the capture of power by the working class."

A. MASLOV.

(*To be continued.*)



# Lessons of German Events and United Front Tactics\*

THE events which took place in Germany in the last few weeks and the tactics adopted by the Communist parties during these events are facts which must be made clear to all the sections of the Communist International. No thinking Communist can abstain from reflecting on the recent events in Germany, and cannot help looking for an answer to a number of "damned questions" connected with these events. The Executive Committee of the Communist International believes that the time has come to speak of this in public. We shall deal more fully in a separate document with the concrete practical tasks confronting the German Communist Party at the present juncture. Here we will only touch on questions which are palpably of international significance.

In October, 1923, the German Communist Party and the Executive Committee of the Comintern believed that the revolutionary crisis in Germany had reached a stage when armed rising would be only a question of weeks. Events have shown that our calculations were exaggerated. Some comrades deal with this question as follows: they say that the revolutionary crisis in Germany was ripe for a victorious armed rising in October, but that the German Communist Party missed the right moment. Hence, the position in which we find ourselves at present. We consider such a diagnosis utterly wrong. Under the existing circumstances, it is, in any case, a palpable mistake to treat this question merely as an error of judgment concerning the appropriate time for the preparation of an armed rising. It is also a mistake to say that the tasks with which the German Communist Party had to contend were of a purely technical nature. The German Communist Party showed itself very weak and made a number of serious mistakes during these critical weeks, but we do not consider it a mistake that it did not bring out the proletariat into a general struggle in the month of October.

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\* Preliminary draft proposal for theses on the German question.

In its retreat, the Party could and should have mobilised the masses for separate big actions—demonstrations, strikes, etc. The retreat should have been less passive. But the relinquishment of a general rising was inevitable under the then existing circumstances.

As it is quite clear to-day, not only the technical, but even the political preparations for decisive battles, were inadequate. The big wave of political strikes in August, 1923, induced us to say that the German Communist Party has already the majority of the proletariat behind it, or at least the majority of those sections of the proletariat which count socially. This happened to be a mistake. The German Communist Party was then (as it is at present) only on the way to conquering this majority. At that time it certainly had not done so. The second half of September and the beginning of October were particularly suitable for the organisation of a series of demonstrations and other actions with the object of drawing large sections of workers into the active struggle. But all this the German Communist Party omitted to do. At that time there was the wrong notion within the Party that the crisis had reached the stage of rising and that partial actions were impossible. The saying was: either a rising or nothing at all. This gave rise, for instance, to an incorrect appreciation of the movement in connection with the anti-fascist day, etc. One of the fundamental shortcomings of the German Communist Party is (as every critical observer and participator of its development knows) its incapacity to concentrate all the efforts of the Party on one main task for a prolonged period, to develop this campaign gradually bringing the working masses into it, and to consolidate its growing influence on the working masses in the mass organisations themselves, etc. The Party had in the factory committees the fundamental historic pre-requisite for an armed rising, namely, a proletarian mass organisation. With the support of these factory committees, the Party should have conducted an energetic agitation for the establishment of Soviets of Workers' Deputies and should have at the same time made the factory committees fit to undertake for the time being the functions of Soviets. The Party omitted to do the former, and did the latter in a very unsatisfactory manner. As a result, workers who are not as yet in the Communist Party, but have already severed all connection with the bourgeoisie and the social democrats, were left without an authoritative centre.

There was no justification for the hope harboured by some comrades to rouse the masses "suddenly" to the pitch of an

armed rising. The technical preparation (we mean the organisational apparatus of the Party, the arming of workers, the fighting capacity of the red hundreds, etc.) proved to be very inadequate.

On the other hand, the technical and political strength of the enemy was under-estimated. At present it has been ascertained that our opponents dispose of at least half a million armed men. The enemy showed also much greater political elasticity and adaptability than anticipated, while the German social-democratic party proved to approximate much more to the counter-revolutionary camp than this was the case before the September events.

Mistakes in fixing dates and estimating the tempo of revolutionary events are bound to happen. But we must do our utmost to make good these mistakes as rapidly as possible and to prevent their repetition in the future.

In this case, too, the tempo of events was miscalculated.

But nevertheless, the fundamental estimate of the state of affairs in Germany, made in October, remains correct. The German Communist Party must on no account remove from its program the question of armed rising and conquest of power. On the contrary, this question is as concrete and urgent as ever. No matter how important the partial victories of the German counter-revolution, they cannot solve the problem. The arming of workers and the technical preparation for decisive struggles must be persisted in. Red hundreds are bound to remain on paper unless they have the sympathy and the support of the working class as a whole. To obtain this support and sympathy, the development of these hundreds must go hand in hand with the everyday partial struggles of the proletariat. These red hundreds can depend on the wholehearted support of the masses in the matter of arming, training and scouting, provided the masses can depend on their protection in their demonstrations, strikes and all other collisions with the bourgeois authorities. Only if such is the case, will the masses look upon them as their shock battalions. The Hamburg example has shown the great significance of a heroic fight put up by Communist shock troops—although in Hamburg too, the support of the masses was very inadequate.

After the defeat of the Russian revolution in 1905 the Mensheviks declared the revolution dead and buried. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, said: the objective tasks of

the revolution are not solved—a second revolution is bound to come.

In this fundamental dispute Bolshevism proved to be right. The second revolution came and conquered. At the same time, Bolshevism miscalculated the time of this second revolution. It expected another rising in 1906 and 1907. But, although it was mistaken in the question of tempo and time, Bolshevism was not mistaken in its fundamental estimation of the class forces.

A proletarian revolution in Germany is inevitable. The revolutionary crisis in Germany is bound to become again more acute in the near future. The objective tasks of the revolution are not yet solved. All the most important factors, which brought Germany to the brink of proletarian revolution, are not only continuing in force, but are becoming more acute. A period of twelve years intervened between the Russian revolution of 1905 and the revolution of 1917. Five years have already elapsed since the first German revolution. But the tempo of development has become more rapid.

There is no doubt whatever that not years, but a much shorter period will intervene between now and the second revolution in Germany. Already soon after the occupation of the Ruhr by the French forces, the Communist International sounded the alarm and endeavoured to concentrate the attention of all its sections on the revolutionary crisis in Germany. The International conferences in Essen and Frankfurt were entirely devoted to these questions. In its instructions to these conferences, the Communist International said plainly that it was not a question of declarations and manifestoes, but of a systematic and stubborn preparation (legally and illegally) for decisive struggles.

The Communist International has no occasion to regret that in October, 1923, it concentrated the attention of all its sections on the nearness of the German revolution. Under analogous conditions the Communist International will have to act precisely in the same manner.

There is no doubt whatever not only that the development of events tends towards revolution, but also that big struggles of the German proletariat with the German bourgeoisie can be expected to take place in the near future, probably already this winter. As before, the tactics of the German Communist Party and of the entire Communist International must rest on the assumption that the prole-

tarian revolution in Germany is a question of the near future.

The transition of the German Communist Party from a legal to an illegal status is accompanied by great difficulties, but on the whole, the Party can cope with its tasks. The sacrifices are great and the difficulties are stupendous, but it is already clear that even a Seeckt will not be able to paralyse the German Communist Party for any length of time.

Germany was the ground where the tactics of the united front were applied in all seriousness. Recent German experiences are the best test for the efficacy or otherwise of these tactics. To be able to guide the sections of the Communist International along the right path, we must carefully study the results of the application of united front tactics during the stormy events which are now developing.

It is precisely in Germany that the strong points of united front tactics were most brilliantly vindicated. At the Third World Congress of the Communist International special attention was paid to the discussion of the tasks of the German Communist Party—in connection with the defeat inflicted on the German proletariat in the March rising in 1921. It was then that the Communist International issued the slogan "to the masses" and that it declared to the German Communists that it was not yet a question of struggle for power, but only a question of the conquest of the majority of the working class. After the decisions of the Third World Congress the German Communist Party applied itself very seriously to the systematic use of united front tactics. The more systematic the application of these tactics, the greater the confusion in the ranks of social-democracy and the more sympathy was bestowed on us by the masses. The entire objective situation in Germany was favourable to the tactics of the united front. If over two years after this decision of the Third World Congress, viz.: after a comparatively short period, the German Communist Party was able to win over to its side such considerable sections of the German proletariat, this was only due to the fact that the German Communist Party had correctly interpreted and applied united front tactics during these years.

Even if we had not had in October, 1923, a guaranteed majority of the German proletariat behind us, the fact alone that German Communists, who a little while ago were only a handful of people, were able in the autumn of 1923 to

consider seriously the question of a guaranteed majority of adherents among the German proletariat, shows that united front tactics (in the first stage of their application in Germany) had achieved their aim. To-day events in Germany are such that the German Communist Party has hard work in store before it will be able to rally to its banner the majority of the German working class. But, in any case, we can boldly say that during the first period of the application of united front tactics, when it was only a question of weaning them from the leading strings of the social-democrats, the German Communist Party acted, on the whole, correctly.

The criticism, which emanates from the circles of the "Left" opposition and which endeavours to condemn united front tactics in general, is faulty through and through. Concerning the application of united front tactics, the "Left" comrades at times accuse the majority of the German Communist Party of paying too much attention to the more backward sections of the proletariat following the social-democrats. This accusation is utterly groundless. For the main object of united front tactics is precisely the gradual emancipation of the more backward middle and rear-guard sections of the proletariat from the influence of the counter-revolutionary social-democratic party. To carry out this task successfully, one must reckon with the psychology and temper of these backward sections when carrying on an agitation among them. In the second half of 1921, during the whole of 1922 and in the first half of 1923, the German Communist Party applied united front tactics with great success. Here, as nowhere else, the strong points of these tactics were made evident.

But it was again in Germany that the events of the last few months showed that the perils connected with the application of united front tactics are also very great.

We must not forget that at the time when united front tactics were adumbrated, the Communist International emphatically pointed out to all parties the perils connected with the application of these tactics. Already in the first theses on the question of the united front, adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International at the end of 1921, we wrote :

"In bringing to your notice the proposed plan, the Executive Committee of the Communist International points out the perils presented by this plan under certain conditions. Not all Communist Parties are sufficiently consoli-

dated, not all of them have definitely renounced centrist and semi-centrist ideology. It is possible that there will be leanings towards the other side and tendencies which might be tantamount to the merging of Communist Parties and groups into one formless bloc. To apply these tactics in a manner favourable to Communism, the Communist Parties themselves must be strong and united and their leadership must be clear and to the purpose." To make its meaning clearer still, the Communist International wrote as follows in the same theses :

" Even in those groupings within the Communist International itself which, with more or less justification are considered to have right or even semi-centrist tendencies, there are no doubt, tendencies of a two-fold nature. Some elements are still imbued with the ideology and methods of the Second International, still look up with reverence to its past organisational might and pursue, semi-consciously or unconsciously, the path of an ideological understanding with the Second International, and consequently, with bourgeois society. Other elements, while struggling against formal radicalism and against the errors of so-called "leftism," etc., are endeavouring to give more elasticity and adaptability to the tactics of the Young Communist Parties, in order to make their penetration into the thick of the working masses more rapid. The rapid development of the Communist Parties invariably drove both these tendencies into one and the same camp, so to speak, into one and the same grouping. The application of the methods indicated by us, which are meant to facilitate Communist agitation in all united mass actions of the proletariat, will best be able to bring to the surface any truly reformist tendencies and (given a correct application of these tactics) will greatly contribute to the inner revolutionary consolidation of the Communist Parties by means of the practical re-education of the impatient or sectarian left elements, as well as by means of purging the Party of all reformist ballast."

The same idea was emphasised in the resolution on the workers' government adopted by the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International. The following statement appears in this resolution.

" With all its great advantages, the workers' government slogan like the tactics of the united front, has its own perils. To avoid these perils and to combat here and now the illusion that a phase of "democratic coalition" is inevitable—Communist Party must bear in mind that every bourgeois government is at the same time a capitalist govern-

ment, but also that not every workers' government is a truly proletarian socialist government."

This warning of the Third and Fourth World Congresses of the Communist International should be in all our minds now when the German Communist Party, one of the best Parties of the Communist International, has been guilty of gross errors in the application of united front tactics.

The greatest of these errors, committed by the German Communist Party, is its conduct in Saxony. The entry of Communists into the Saxon Government was interpreted by the Communist International (and it could not be interpreted otherwise) as a special military-political task having for its aim to facilitate to the revolutionary vanguard the conquest of a place d'armes, and to initiate the direct struggle of the German proletariat for political power throughout the country.

If the direct military task had receded (because of the slower tempo of events), the Saxon Communists, under these circumstances, could and should have done much, and this is what they should have done above all :

1. They should have come to a clear understanding on the question of arming the workers. From the very beginning of their participation in the workers' government, the Communists should have entirely concentrated on the question of arming the proletariat. Moreover, this is what the Executive Committee of the Communist International stipulated when deliberating with the German comrades on the question of Communist participation in the Saxon workers' government.

2. The Communists should have also immediately brought forward the question of the nationalisation of big industries, of the confiscation of bourgeois houses and of the mansions of the rich for the homeless workers and their children, of the immediate arrest of manufacturers sabotaging production, etc.

3. The Communists should have also revived the idea of the establishment of political Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

4. The Communists should have from the very beginning of their participation in the so-called workers' government criticised openly and nailed to the post the weakness and counter-revolutionary spirit of the left social-democrats, headed by Zeigner.

5. The Communists should have raised the question of secession from the left social-democrats, as soon as it became evident that the latter could not be depended upon for a single decisive revolutionary measure.

Nothing of the kind was done. And much was done which was contrary to all this. The Communist Ministers were emphatic in declaring that they intended to keep "within the constitution," and were never tired to reiterate "that they are only responsible to the Landtag." This gave to the whole agitation of the Party a character which it was not intended to have. And the result was—not militant Communism, but a fairly tame and loyal Communist opposition to the "left" social democrats. Instead of militant action and revolutionary strategy, there was a banal parliamentary co-operation with the "left" social-democrats. At times the Party, or at least its representatives in the "workers'" government became actually the captives of the "left" social-democrats.

The Saxon "left" social-democrats, headed by Zeigner kept up a close connection with the centrist elements of social-democracy. The latter, in their turn, were and still are at the beck and call of the right social-democrats, who are at the beck and call of Stresemann, Stresemann being the obedient servant of Seeckt and Seeckt the obedient servant of avowed fascism. Such are the links of this complete chain.

The angle from which the Saxon situation had been viewed turned out to be wrong. The Party exaggerated the political significance of Saxon events and under-estimated the significance of such a centre as Berlin.

In Saxony itself, the German Communist Party failed to transfer its base to the factory committees, viz.: it failed to organise a united proletarian front from below by effecting a fusion of factory committees into an opposition bloc to the social-democratic leaders who were contemplating the betrayal of the workers. The Central Committee of the Communist Party failed to realise that the "left" social-democratic leaders in Saxony were, at best, only prepared for parliamentary collaboration with the Communists, and were by no means ready to enter side by side with the Communists into an armed struggle against the bourgeoisie. In view of all these mistakes the Chemnitz Conference produced unexpected results.

The German Communist Party must recognise the mistakes committed during the Saxon experiment. Failing

this, the Party will be unable to adopt correct tactics in the future. The Saxon experiment has discredited once and for all the "left" social-democrats. It showed that these "chevaliers de la triste figure" are nothing but servants of the counter-revolution. But this same experiment also showed that there are in our party elements who do not understand the tactics of the united front and do not know how to apply them in a revolutionary spirit.

At present the leading sections of German social democracy are nothing but a fraction of German fascism with a "Socialist" phraseology. This is not an exaggeration, but a fact. Fascism is a mixture of the blackest counter-revolution and irresponsible Socialist demagogery. And part of this "synthesis" are the leading sections of the yellow social democracy. In its gradual degeneration, the entire international social democracy has become objectively nothing but a variety of fascism, viz.: one of the many existing counter-revolutionary groups—which does not prevent considerable sections of social democratic workers still considering themselves Socialists. Who can doubt that the Italian social democracy, headed by Turati and Modigliani, is at present nothing but a fraction of Italian fascism? Can anyone doubt that, let us say, the Bulgarian social democrats, headed by Yanko Sakysov, who are in the Cabinet of the fascist Zankov and who take upon themselves the function of executioners of workers and peasants, are nothing but a fraction of Bulgarian fascism? The same applies to the German social democracy in the present stage of development. General Seeckt, who does not materially differ from the fascisti, did not have to overcome the German social democracy. It is the latter itself which produced General Seeckt, promulgated him to his present post, and is, in fact, his ally. In the course of 5 years, since October, 1918, when after the first German revolution power came into the hands of so-called "peoples' representatives" (three social democrats and three independent social democrats), the German social democrats and independents (the present "left" social democrats) were merely engaged in gradually slipping into the camp of bourgeois counter-revolution, giving up their power to the fascisti. At present this process is nearing completion. The legal heir of the first "revolutionary" government of Scheidemann-Haase is none other than the fascist General Seeckt. The November Republic has nurtured and brought up fascism. In a situation, which in some of its features was similar to the present situation in Germany—on the threshold between two revolutions, Comrade Lenin said: Russia is divided into three camps.

1. The black, right camp (the landowners and big capitalists).
2. The vacillating centre (the petty-bourgeoisie, the Cadets (Constitution democrats) and other "democracy.")
3. The left camp (the workers and part of the peasantry).

Bolshevism was fully aware that even within the first camp there are sub-groups, that for instance, merchants belonging to the Octobrist party differ somewhat from the reactionary black landowners adhering to the "Union of Russian People" (to-day they would be called fascisti), that between the first and second camp there are intermediate groups, etc. But Bolshevism knew that these shades and details are not a decisive factor. Bolshevism taught the people, and above all, the working class to be guided by this division of the country into three camps.

On the main, Communists in Germany must act at present in the same manner. Taking into consideration the wide masses of the population, the millions and tens of millions of people, we can safely say that present day Germany is also divided into three camps.

1. The black camp, which contains the entire big bourgeoisie, a considerable section of the middle bourgeoisie, and the richest section of the peasantry. In fact, it is a fascist camp.
2. Large sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, including a considerable part of the better-to-do workers, who still consider themselves social-democrats.
3. The nucleus of the urban proletariat, which realises the inevitability of revolutionary struggle. There is no doubt whatever that the black camp in Germany is doing its utmost to get the support of the small people, and that its efforts in that direction are fairly successful. Therefore one of the most important tasks of the Communist Party must be a systematic and stubborn struggle for the emancipation of the impoverished and ruined elements of the petty-bourgeoisie from the influence of fascism. On this field Communist success is guaranteed, for fascisti are now saving capitalism not only at the expense of the workers, but also at the expense of considerable sections of the petty-bourgeoisie.

If we study the German case in its dynamics, we obtain the following picture :

Up to September, 1923, the first and third camps were to the fore. The middle, vacillating elements (the second camp) tried to steer a "middle" course (a smooth course) and made efforts to save capitalism.

As far as the masses are concerned, such a second middle camp exists even now. But a re-grouping has taken place since October in the leading party circles : the leading forces of the second camp (social democratic)—the leaders—went over into the first camp. Social democratic leaders are simply becoming a screen for the black camp.

There is, of course, a class difference between Ebert and Seeckt, and we must not leave this out of account. But objectively, Ebert is the lackey and prisoner of Seeckt. The Eborts and Severings do not want to and cannot escape from the tight hold of fascism.

There is no doubt whatever that at present the political aims of the Eborts and Seeckts are identical.

Speaking of the upper strata, the leading political groups, it is evident that the first and second camps are merging into one another. Of course, there is a difference between Hitler-Ludendorf-Kar-Knilling-Seeckt. There are various shades of opinion and private dissensions between Severing-Ebert, as well as between Scheidemann on the one hand, and Seeckt on the other hand. The Eborts and Severings are still endeavouring to retain the support of the democratic sections of the population, including the better-to-do workers. But these are only small differences—mere shades of opinion. On all main points they agree among themselves : their common task is—the strangulation of the proletarian revolution in Germany.

German Communists must, of course, be mindful of the details and shades of opinion in the enemy camp, but the main thing is—that the people, the working class understand the crux of the matter. And the crux of the matter is—that there is no difference between General Seeckt and the fascisti, that the upper stratum of German social democracy has become fascist through and through, and has entered into a life and death alliance with General Seeckt (the German Kolchak) which is directed against the German revolution.

That is why all our relations to social democracy must be revised. Recent events have shown beyond any doubt whatever that the leading strata of social democracy will always be the worst enemies of the working class and will fight to the last against the proletariat on the other side of the barricades. German Communists must bear in mind that even the November bourgeois revolution in Germany in 1918, which dethroned William II. and established the power of the "democratic" bourgeoisie, was brought about in spite of and against the will of the leaders of German social democracy. The tactics of the Eberts and Scheidemanns were directed to the last minute towards the preservation of William II.'s crown. The Scheidemanns and Eberts, Wels and Muellers will fight, all the more to the last against the approaching proletarian revolution.

But the policy of the present "left" social democracy is more dangerous even than the policy of the Scheidemanns and Eberts. To-day the most dangerous enemy of the proletarian revolution in Germany is—the so-called "left" social democracy. It is the last illusion of social democratic workers, the last historical masquerade. German Communists must bear in mind that among left social democrats there are, in the best case, heroes of the type of Zeigner, who condescend to work with Communists within the framework of "parliamentary" institutions, but that "left" social democrats willing to make common cause with Communists for an open armed struggle against the bourgeoisie, are non-existent. Even rank and file social democratic workers do not any longer believe in such avowed traitors as Noske, Ebert and Co. But "left" social democrats, such as Rosenfeld, Crispin, Zeigner and Levi, who are in fact only a shield for the dirty counter-revolutionary policy of the right social democrats, still enjoy the confidence of a considerable section of workers.

The time has come for the German Communist Party to make it known throughout the country that it will have no more negotiations and agreements with the Central Committee of the German social democratic party. For we have nothing to negotiate about with the avowed counter-revolutionary bourgeois elements who form part of this Central Committee. Either the fascist bourgeoisie will be victorious in Germany and the corrupt leaders of the German social democratic party, the hirelings of the fascisti, will continue their brutal methods against the workers, or the German proletariat will be victorious. In that case the victory will be certainly achieved in spite of the Central Committee of the German social democratic party.

The time has come for the German Communist Party to openly declare that there can be no more negotiations and agreements with the central group of the so-called "left" social democrats until these heroes muster at least enough courage to sever organisational connection with the counter-revolutionary band holding sway in the Central Committee of the German social-democratic party.

Some comrades, while accepting the proposals to break off all negotiations with the upper strata of the social democratic party, try to explain our present abandonment of these negotiations by the assertion that the fascist victory over social democracy has done away with the motive for partial demands and at the same time with the basis for agreements with the upper strata of social democracy. To approach this question from this viewpoint is utterly wrong, for just the opposite is the case. If we did really see on the one side victorious fascist reaction and on the other side of the barricades social democracy defeated by fascism, this would be an inducement for a closer union between Communists and social-democrats for a joint struggle against the common enemy—fascism. But unfortunately, the leading strata of German social democracy have themselves turned fascist.

With regard to the program of the social democrats (as its exists on paper) General Seeckt is trampling it underfoot. But in this respect the social-democratic leaders are not much better. And as to the present ideology of German social democracy, it is not very far removed from General Seeckt's regime. The main task and the most ardent desire of these social democratic leaders is—the strangulation of the proletarian revolution. General Seeckt is not the only one to declare the German Communist Party illegal, for once upon a time Noske did the same. Even now we are not far wrong in saying that Seeckt works hand in hand with Ebert and Co.

The events of August-October, 1923, frightened the social-democratic leaders even more than the events of 1918-19. "The Red Spectre" of social revolution made them veer round sharply to the right.

Just as the October-December events in 1905 in Russia made all the leading elements of "democratic liberalism" (Struve, Miliukov) turn towards Tsarism, so have the events of August-October, 1923, in Germany induced the leaders of German social democracy (Ebert, Scheidemann) to support the dictatorship of General Seeckt.

**Unity from below.** This is what united front tactics have led up to in Germany.

To draw the attention of the brother parties to the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks, we wrote as follows, already in the first theses of the Communist International (December, 1921) :

"To counteract the diplomatic game of the Menshevik leaders, the Russian Bolsheviks issued the slogan "Unity from below," viz.: unity of the working masses themselves in the practical struggle for revolutionary workers' demands against the capitalists. Practice has shown that this was the only correct answer to the Menshevik challenge. As a result of these tactics, which were adapted to circumstances, time and place, a very large number of the best Menshevik workers went gradually over to the Communist side."

The time has come for the German Communist Party to make good its mistake and to put into practice the slogan "**Unity from below.**" There is a state of ferment among the workers who still adhere to the German social-democratic party. These workers are looking for a new orientation and realise the bankruptcy of the social-democratic leaders. While we definitely refuse to have any negotiations with the counter-revolutionary leaders, we have, of course, no reason whatever to abstain from local negotiations and agreements with social-democratic workers wherever we find that we have to do with honest proletarians intent on turning over a new leaf and devoted to the revolutionary cause.

The present conditions within the German social-democratic party offer a good opportunity for the promotion of the idea of unity from below. It is not an exaggeration to say that the German social-democratic party is at present a conglomerate of loosely connected local organisations which differ radically in their political orientation. The parliamentary fraction plays, in fact, the role of Central Committee, but it is exactly this parliamentary social-democratic fraction which is most compromised in the eyes of rank and file members of the Party. To be consistent, we should demand from every local social-democratic organisation, as a preliminary condition to a united front pact with us, severance of relations with the Central Committee of the German social-democratic party. But the present is not an opportune time to make this the rule. The fact alone that a local social-democratic organisation enters into a serious agreement with the Communist Party and engages in a joint struggle against the existing

regime, is tantamount to severance from the counter-revolutionary upper stratum of German social democracy.

But to carry out these tactics of local agreements and unity from below, it is absolutely necessary for the German Communist Party to recognise its past errors. If we do not make good these mistakes, we run the risk of compromising united front tactics, which still hold good.

**Unity from below.** We must be careful not to place too mechanical an interpretation on this slogan. For unity from below requires also careful and systematic organisation. It is not enough to stand up for this slogan at general workers' meetings and before the masses. It must also be carefully explained at delegates' meetings, in separate trade unions, in factory and workshop committees, and in district and town working class centres. Beginning "from below," the idea must be systematically developed, link upon link, must be added to the chain with the purpose of arriving at a unity of the working masses capable of guaranteeing victory.

Mistakes in the application of united front tactics were inevitable. Such mistakes were committed in a number of countries. In France, in the beginning of 1922, a considerable section of the Party did not understand united front tactics and was genuinely afraid that these tactics are an ideological concession to social democracy. In Great Britain some comrades had at first the mistaken notion that united front tactics debarred the Communist Party of the right to criticise the opportunist Labour party in Parliament. In Finland similar mistakes were made. In Roumania some comrades really thought that united front tactics meant parliamentary collaboration with the right social-democrats. The Italian Communist Party sinned for a long time in the opposite direction and failed to use united front tactics as a means to expose the Italian social-democrats (and to a certain extent, this is still the case). A number of other parties interpreted these tactics in a too mechanical manner. They imagined that it was sufficient to address once a month a stereotyped message to the social-democrats, and then forget all about it. They did not know how to make united front tactics an actual part of their political struggle, etc.

Nevertheless, we do not think that the idea itself is bad because its interpretation and application has not been up to the mark. An erroneous application of united front tactics (especially in the beginning), in a number of countries does not mean that the tactics themselves are erroneous. Did not

the same thing happen with the idea of revolutionary parliamentarism? The tactics of a revolutionary use of parliamentarism was and remains correct. Nevertheless, a practical application of these tactics was, and to a certain extent, still is fraught with difficulties. But this does not at all mean that those who reject revolutionary parliamentarism in principle are right. The same, but in a still higher degree applies to the tactics of the united front.

What we really need is—that Communists be perfectly clear on the nature and purpose of united front tactics. It must be understood once and for all, that for the Communist International, united front tactics were and are only a method of agitation among workers who still believe in the social-democrats, and also among revolutionary inclined workers in general (including non-party workers)—a method adapted to the present epoch. One must once and for all part with the idea that united front tactics are something more than a method, that they are calculated for a possible, more or less prolonged union between Communists and social-democrats, a union which is to establish within the framework of democracy a “workers’ government” during the transition period, etc. If there are still people who harbour this illusion, they must get rid of it once and for all.

When we speak of revolutionary agitation, we do not, of course, mean that it should take the place of revolutionary organisation and struggle, for they go together. United front tactics are based, of course, on a sincere desire on the part of Communists to co-operate with the social democrats whenever the latter are willing (if it be only on the most elementary questions) to put up a **real** fight against the bourgeoisie. We are always willing to follow the policy of “walking apart but striking together.”

The slogan “workers’ government” (or workers’ and peasants’ government) was and still is a transitory agitational slogan. It is better able than any other slogan to rally to Communism not only the proletarian vanguard, but also the middle sections of the working class (which still stand between us and the social-democrats) and under favourable conditions, also the rearguard sections, of the proletarian heavy infantry. But it would be a great misfortune for the international working class movement, if we were to create in the minds of the workers the illusion that a workers’ (or workers’ and peasants’) government can really be established by peaceful parliamentary methods, as a result of an agreement with the social-democratic leaders. The situation in all the main

countries of Europe is such that even if the social-democrats were to go over like one man to the side of the workers (which would be too much to expect of them), a peaceful solution of the crisis would be impossible. This same social democracy did its utmost for a number of years to strengthen the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which has grown so strong that it will nowhere give up power merely under peaceful "democratic" pressure. Moreover, the leaders of social democracy, far from intending to go over to the side of the struggling proletariat, are, on the contrary, giving more and more support to the bourgeoisie counter-revolution, and have even gone so far as to become a wing of fascism.

Fascist dictatorship must be replaced by proletarian dictatorship under the leadership of the Communist Party. This is our message to the workers. The Communist International must explain to the masses systematically and persistently, taking advantage of every suitable example, every important episode of the civil war and especially of such important events as those in Germany, that it is useless to expect a peaceful transition to a workers' (or workers' and peasants') government within the framework of democracy. We must explain to the workers that the united front of the entire proletariat will make the struggle considerably easier and will ensure victory, but that it will on no account substitute peaceful, democratic and painless evolution for revolutionary struggle. The tactics of the united front are tactics of revolution and not of evolution. The only advantage of these tactics is that they guarantee success to the revolution, and not at all that they substitute peaceful evolution for revolution.

It goes without saying that united front tactics, as a method of agitation among large working masses, are adapted to a definite epoch, namely to the epoch when Communists in nearly all the most important countries are in a minority in the labour movement, and when definite revolutionary battles do not as yet take place. As the situation changes, the application of united front tactics will have to change also. Even now the practical application of these tactics is bound to differ in different countries. As an illustration of this, let me point out that the form of united front tactics recommended for Germany, would, for instance, not be suitable at all for Poland. The Sections of the Communist International must learn, under the general guidance of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, to adapt united front tactics to the concrete situation in any given country.

The events which took place in the period of September-November, 1923, in Bulgaria, Poland and Germany, are to all intents and purposes the beginning of a new chapter in the history of international revolution. As the struggle will grow more intense and will assume a more decisive character, we shall have to modify more than once, the application of united front tactics in the various countries. There will be a time (and it is not far distant) when we shall see the collapse of hitherto large social-democratic parties, when Amsterdam trade unions will go over wholesale to our side or, persisting in their treachery, will burst before our eyes like soap bubbles, and when whole sections of social-democratic workers will spontaneously join our ranks. United front tactics are accelerating the trend of events. And when the time for action will have arrived, we shall have, of course, to make the necessary tactical deductions from all this.

Isolated timid attempts of "left" Communists to use the mistakes made by the best of all Comintern sections—the German Section, as an excuse for the liquidation of united front tactics, must be energetically resisted. United front tactics were and are correct, notwithstanding the errors committed even by such a Party as the German C.P. The Communist International cannot allow the baby to be poured out with the bathwater. Our task is—to profit by the mistakes which were made and to learn to avoid them in the future, and not by any means to multiply them by committing others of a more serious nature.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International is convinced that the German Communist Party, which is gathering everyday new political experience, will be well able to remedy the errors of which it was guilty and to come out on to the right path. The Executive Committee of the Communist International does not think that a proper estimation of German events gives ground for pessimism. True revolutionaries and genuine Communists are not afraid of difficulties, and do not waver at the first sign of defeat. The task confronting the German Communist Party is stupendous. The Party, and no one but the Party, must lead the 15-20 million strong German proletariat into the battle. The battles, which will soon be fought in Germany, will decide the fate not only of the German, but of the entire European

proletariat. Communists throughout the world are sympathetically watching the heroic struggle of the German Communist Party, which is conducting this struggle under a regime of white terror, under a shower of shrapnel and under the treacherous blows of the social-democrats. Brotherly support on the part of the Communist International, as a whole, and on the part of its various Sections is guaranteed to the German Communist Party.

G. ZINOVIEV.

Translated by E. BOUVIER.



# The Propaganda of Leninism

MANY years will go by before the magnitude of Lenin's life work will be fully appreciated by the historian. But this does not mean that the study and propaganda of Leninism and the elaboration of all concrete problems connected with it should not be taken up now in all seriousness. At present we see in the Russian press and in a very small section of the International press only the beginnings of a thorough study of Lenin and of the systematisation of Leninism.\*

However, the popularisation of Lenin's teachings among the working class masses, including those outside the Communist Party is one of the most important immediate political tasks of every Communist Party just as the assimilation of Lenin's teachings by the vanguard destined to organise and direct the revolution—the sections of the Communist International, is an indispensable pre-requisite for any further successes of the proletarian revolution. For, even if Lenin was right in saying that : "It is more pleasant and useful to go through 'the experience of revolution' than to write about it," there is no doubt whatever that, as far as revolutionary theory and revolutionary experience (again according to Lenin) are the pre-requisite for the existence of a revolutionary party and for a favourable issue of revolution, widespread propaganda of Lenin's teachings and its proper assimilation by Communist parties are necessary if the two great tasks before every Communist Party—the development of Communist Parties into a *real vanguard* of the proletariat and their close contact with the masses are to be achieved.

Lenin's death, as every great and moving event, cannot but cause heart searchings on the part of fighters in the ranks of forces which he created and which fought under his guidance. In this sense, his death was bound to have and actually had a beneficent influence on the Communist Parties, and, of course, above all on the Party which for

\* The first, and not very successful attempt in this direction in the foreign Communist press, is Ernest Dran's pamphlet "Lenin—Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianov, bio-bibliography" (Prager, Berlin, 1924) which was published quite recently. We shall have to refer again to this pamphlet.

several decades was under his direct leadership in his stubborn and victorious struggle, namely, the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). After Lenin's death, the latter was not satisfied with reviewing its ranks very carefully, and with making a thorough analysis of its inner position, and of the forms and methods of its contact with the masses, but found immediately means, through collaboration between the leaders and the masses, to fill the enormous gap in the structure of the Party caused by Lenin's death. What actuated the Party to concentrate on the improvement of its own structure, was the desire to be strong enough to cope with the tasks entailed by the expansion of the Party. In response to the Party's call to fill the gap caused by Lenin's death, close on 250,000 workers at the bench—experienced factory workers, expressed their desire to enter into the Party. This is an illustration not only of the Party's policy in general, but also of the success of the widespread propaganda of Leninism. But the Party does not stop at that; it is opening 1,200 new Party schools for the proletarians already received into its ranks (about 100,000), it mobilises hundreds of propagandists who are sent to the industrial districts for the purpose of making the new Party members, all of whom are closely connected with production, real and capable leaders of the masses whose work and struggles they share. The Party is sending 3,000 of its members to the countryside, and everyone of them will work for the realisation of the main point of Lenin's teaching—union between workers and peasants, not only by their everyday organisational and administrative activities, but also by their propaganda. All the old Party members, as well as the young blood of the Party make a serious examination of themselves to ascertain the extent to which they are imbued with the spirit of Lenin's teachings. The thirst for knowledge, which after the transition to peaceful constructive work took possession of the working class youth of the Republic, seeks to find an outlet in the assimilation of the teachings of our dead leader. The growing Soviet publication departments are unable to cope with the demand for Lenin's works and for books of well arranged extracts from his works. Every member of the Communist Party, worthy of the name of Communist is actuated by the desire, by assimilating Lenin's teachings, to become a capable and active participator in the activities imposed on him by Lenin's death. Extensive and thoughtful propaganda of Leninism will have great and fruitful results for the Party, and as far as the policy of the Party is concerned, it will be of enormous importance because **Leninism means—revolutionary Marxist theory put into revolutionary practice.**

Leninism brings to nought all the illusions and hopes set on Lenin's death by a certain section of the international imperialist bourgeoisie and its faithful lackeys—the social-democrats of all countries. To the old Bolshevik guard which for decades learned its lessons in the school of revolution, under the direct guidance of Lenin, to this guard welded into an indivisible whole and elastic withal, the revolutionary schooling together with the fight put up by Lenin and his most intimate fellow-fighters, political leadership by the Lenin method seems to come natural. Moreover, it has not only shown that it can act up to Lenin's precepts, but that it can also import them to the masses. This fact is no doubt of great importance to the Communist International and all its sections. On the other hand, this does not by any means solve the task imposed by Lenin's death on the Communist International and its sections.

The Communist International consists of elements with a very varied political past just as the Russian Communist Party which, by becoming the governing Party, attracted to it many new elements which permeate all the branches of the State apparatus. This has made the composition of the Party, if not heterogeneous, at least multifarious to a high degree. The organisational unity of the Comintern and the absolute necessity for the further development of this unity can only be guaranteed by the intensification of that ideological unity which, in the form of the revival of Marxism and of the re-establishment of its orthodox and revolutionary character, is the essence of Leninism. One can say that the Communist parties of Western and Central Europe stand perhaps in greater need of a thorough assimilation of Lenin's precepts than the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). And this not only because they have not at their disposal an old guard seasoned by prolonged struggle against opportunism and by revolutionary action, but because they are, as the whole history of the Communist International shows, very much given to veering either to the Left or to the Right and *vice versa*, and are less able to resist such tendencies than the masses of the Russian Communist Party. Under such circumstances the best remedy is—a thorough assimilation of Lenin's teachings. The future of the Comintern and its most urgent political tasks make it therefore incumbent on it as well as on its sections not to lag behind the Russian Communist Party in the matter of organising propaganda of Leninism and of fulfilling concrete tasks in connection with this propaganda.

It goes without saying that not a single one of the Comintern sections is at present capable of establishing a sys-

tem of Communist educational work and create a network of Communist educational institutions, such as have been established by the Russian Communist Party for the propaganda of Leninism. Nevertheless, it is self-evident that some **system** of Communist educational work making propaganda of Leninism possible, must be elaborated and introduced with as little delay as possible. It is also very essential that methods and forms of general propaganda be elaborated everywhere, and be adapted to the conditions of the respective countries. This task must be included without any further delay into the business program of all Comintern Sections.

Before this task can be carried out every Communist Party must go through a process of thorough self-analysis. For this, it is essential to get, at least an approximately true picture of the **ideological attitude of the masses and of the leading cadres of the Comintern and of its sections.**

The determining factors in this ideological attitude are : the composition of the Communist Parties and its development since the establishment of the Comintern and its various parties.

All the Communist Parties of Western and Central Europe have their origin in the old social-democratic parties and are the outcome of a theoretical struggle of considerable magnitude. The initial embryos of these Communist Parties came to fruition in the feverish atmosphere of this theoretical struggle during the war and after it. Although the Western Communist Parties contributed very little of their own to this theoretical struggle against social democracy, although their defence of the revolutionary conception of Marxism was very inadequate and although they received most of their fighting equipment ready-made from Lenin and his more intimate fellow fighters, it still remains a fact that at the time when the Parties were in a stage of development and when they were only beginning "to assume a definite character of their own," the influence of this theoretical struggle was considerable and beneficial. At that time the Communist Parties led an active ideological existence, and their propaganda was not only militant. It did not lack in depth, while it certainly lacked in breadth. Those were the times when the West-European Communist Parties continually kept before the masses the questions of the theory of the State. The true meaning of imperialism was one of the main subjects discussed at mass meetings, and agitators, armed with Lenin's "State and Revolution," brought forward Marxism in its original and *bona fide* form against the fraudulent

imitations of Marxian teaching disseminated by the right "Kautsky" centrists and the Austro-Marxian social-democrats. Of course, most of the most prominent students and experts of Marxism, the chief theorists of the workers' movement of the Second International, remained in the camp of the social traitors or centrists, and only very few of them joined the Communist camp. Nevertheless, taking into consideration that the Communist Parties were as yet very young, propaganda at that time was very active and did not even lack depth. The same may be said of the educational work carried on by the Communists. What the propaganda of the Communist Parties lacked was—a critical appreciation of revolutionary experience, its independent control and application.

But nevertheless, the idea that "only the Party, guided by an advanced theory, is capable of being the vanguard of the proletariat," became the guiding idea among rank and file members as well as in the leading circles of the Communist Parties.

It goes without saying that this period was not without its dangers which found expression mainly in a certain sectarianism (Dutch Marxism which succeeded in recruiting many adherents, especially in the circles of Communist intellectuals who, before joining the revolution had kept aloof from the workers' movement). Leninism, as well as Lenin himself did not, of course, tolerate very long such a conventional application of his teachings in the interests of narrow sectarianism, and entered immediately an energetic protest against such procedure. The sectarian peril was soon eliminated owing to the Comintern's successful struggle on the theoretical as well as on the practical field against estrangement from the masses and for the transformation of the Communist Parties into mass parties.

And as a result, the Communist Parties in all the countries of Western and Central Europe underwent a process of rapid development. But it remains to be seen, if with the growth of the influence of the Communist Parties, Communist propaganda has also gained in depth, and if Communist education of the Party masses themselves, as well as of the Party workers and even of the leading circles of the Party have kept pace with the growth of the influence of the latter. (Moreover, this growth of the influence of the Communist Parties is not by any means as general as it should be if the Communist Parties are to become the leaders of the majority of the proletariat. A solution of this question must be provided through the analysis and self-analysis of the

Comintern and all its sections. We do not anticipate that the answer to this question will be of an entirely reassuring nature. The masses, awakened to revolutionary class consciousness by the objective conditions of the revolutionary epoch, the treachery of the social democratic parties, and the agitation of the Communist Parties have not as yet been used to the full for propaganda purposes. What is felt most everywhere is—the absence of a cadre capable of taking the lead in this propagandist work. If there was justification for the well-founded accusations brought forward against the Communist daily press for its failure to get near enough to the masses, to become their mouthpiece and the tribune of the revolutionary movement, there will be perhaps still more justification for the accusations (as yet kept back) against Communist papers, whose purpose is thorough-going propaganda, and against Communist educational work.

Ideologically, the state of affairs within the leading cadres of the Parties is not any better as shown by last year's "religious crisis" in the Scandinavian Parties. Another example of this is: the attempt in German literary circles to revise or rather to castrate, dialectical materialism. Other illustrations of this phenomenon are—the ideological deviations of the Norwegian group "Mot Dag" and the Bergsonianism of the Italian Party. Another example is the crisis in the German Party following on the October defeat, which brought to light in Communist ranks a number of relics of social democratic ideology. The political result of this state of affairs is—the failure of any one of the Communist Parties to adopt a strategy and tactics commensurate with the conditions in its country by means of scientific Marxian analysis. That this is so is also shown by the nature of the discussion on the Comintern program, which barely reached the upper strata of the Communist Parties and had hardly any echo in the daily Communist press.

These remarks do not of course claim to be even an approach to a concrete appreciation of the ideological condition of the Comintern and its sections, or even to a superficial analysis of it. We are of opinion that in this respect no one person can do more than raise the question, as the accomplishment of this task can only be the result of the collective work of all Parties under the guidance of the Comintern. Nevertheless, this question had to be raised and this work must be carried to a conclusion because without it the elaboration of Communist training and the more or less successful solution of the question of the systematisation and propaganda of Leninism and of the forms and methods of this propaganda are impossible. In this respect Lenin's death

must stir up the Communist Parties of Western and Central Europe as it has stirred up the Russian Communist Party. The magnificent legacy left by Lenin to the revolutionary parties of the proletariat must be put to the fullest possible use. It must be used systematically for propaganda purposes. With this aim in view, we deem it necessary to bring forward the following tasks of a general character.

**1. Concretisation and specialisation of the general resolutions of the Fourth Congress on educational work in the direction of propaganda of Leninism.**

The Fourth Congress dealt with the question of Communist training and education only in a general, and perhaps even in a too general way. The resolution did not express with sufficient clarity Lenin's idea that Communist theory must underlie our everyday practical work. Probably, this accounts for the fact that the resolution remained to a great extent on paper, and that we failed to give more depth and breadth to our educational work and to make it one of our actual political tasks which cannot be separated from the everyday struggle of the Parties.

It would be advisable to discuss this question at the Comintern Congress or in one of its sections, and also to have preliminary discussions on it in everyone of our parties.

**2. Systematical popularisation of the literary heritage of Lenin among the working masses of the West.** In this respect, the Comintern has already done much preliminary work, but this work must assume a permanent character. The literary heritage of Lenin must be systematically elaborated from all viewpoints, and in accordance with the state of development of our several sections, and with various demands it must be published in the form of a manual compiled in such a way as to form the basis of everyday Party work.

**3. Creation of propagandist cadres needed for propaganda of Leninism on a large scale.** Every Communist Party will have to deal with the following tasks: revision of its propagandist cadres, which must be given an opportunity and placed under the obligation to make themselves fit for a proper use of Lenin's heritage as a whole or of some parts of it. On this field, it is very important to study Lenin's precepts on Communist education and on the tasks and methods of Communist training, as well as the agitational and propagandist methods of Lenin himself. "To learn to spread political enlightenment—that is the question. But we have not learned to do this, and we do not approach this question

from a Communist viewpoint," said Lenin, and these words of his are as applicable to the Communist Parties of the West, as they were at that time applicable to the Russian Communist Party.

This method can be systematically and fully elaborated by means of an analysis and systematic specialisation of the agitational and propagandist methods of Lenin and by means of the systematisation of his oral and written remarks on the tasks of Communist education.

4. Adaptation of the educational institutions of all Communist Parties for propaganda of Leninism, even if it be on a modest scale. A beginning must be made, although cautiously, with the application of the principle of the obligatory training and education of every Communist. This is, of course, connected with great difficulties for the Communist Party of Central and Western Europe. It pre-supposes a high level of organisation and requires careful training on the literary field, as well as with regard to methodical work. But despite these difficulties the task is by no means hopeless.

5. In connection with making propaganda of Leninism part of our programme, due consideration should be given to the attitude of some of our literary Communists. Among them there are people who, while not as yet reputed political writers, might show in the future a tendency to deviate from orthodox Marxism. It was Lenin, more than anyone else, who reacted very energetically on all such tendencies, especially when they made their appearance in the Communist International. The difficult struggle in which the Communist Parties of Western and Central Europe are engaged, is hardly conducive to active Party workers following carefully any ideological deviations which might spring up here and there (surreptitious penetration of idealistic philosophy, neo-Hegelianism, Makhism, etc.). Nevertheless, we cannot ignore these questions, for to be true to the spirit of Lenin's precepts, no Communist Party can ignore the propaganda of dialectical materialism.

Such are, on the whole, the tasks which Lenin's death makes it incumbent on the Comintern and all its sections to solve in a systematic manner.

It is true of the Comintern, as of the Communist Party that Lenin can only be replaced by a vast and powerful body of Communists welded into a strong and indivisible whole by ideological and organisational unity. It is this which makes

it imperative for every Communist Party not only to strengthen and deepen its union with the masses, but also to raise its own level. It is this which demands the consolidation of the ideological unity and the extension of the ideological qualities of the Comintern and all its sections. The consolidation and extension of the union with the masses pre-supposes not only the realisation of Lenin's strategy and tactics, but also the propagation of these principles by Lenin's methods. It is only by placing on a higher level its own ideals and qualities that the Party and its members will be able to strengthen their union with the masses and to widen the Party itself. It is only by assimilating the enormous revolutionary experience embodied in Leninism, that the Communist Parties will be able to adopt towards every revolutionary event an independent and critical attitude. It is only by making Lenin's precepts part of themselves that Communist Parties will be able to make the masses assume the revolutionary role accruing to them, and attract to their banner large numbers of those who are even outside the ranks of the working class and of the peasantry.

BELA KUN.

Translated by E. BOUVIER.



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